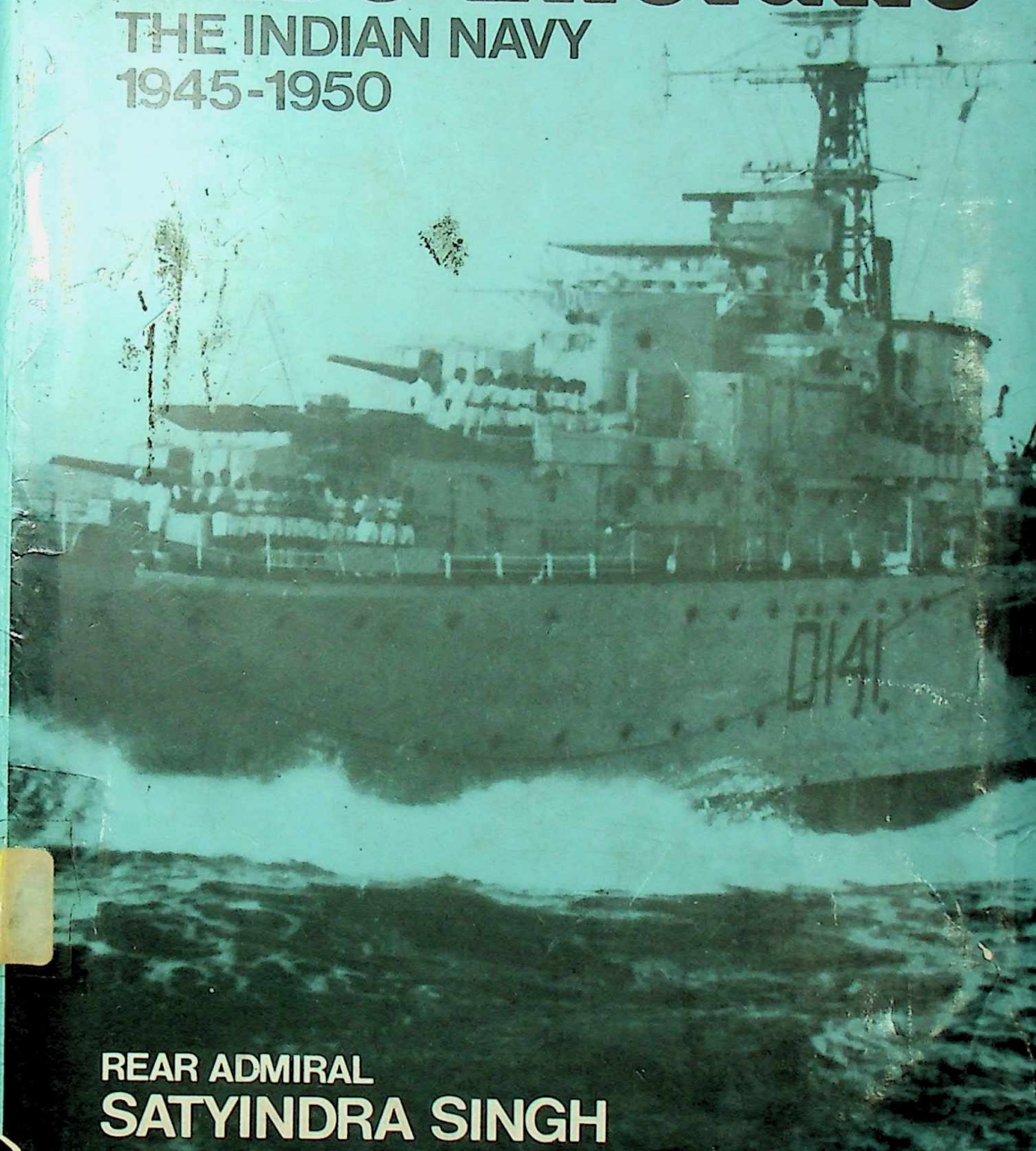


UNDER TWO ENSIGNS

THE INDIAN NAVY
1945-1950



REAR ADMIRAL
SATYINDRA SINGH

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Rear Admiral SATYINDRA SINGH AVSM (Retd.)



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Foreword

INDIA HAS a rich maritime heritage. The Indian Navy and our sister Service, the Merchant Marine, have much to be proud of in our sea-faring traditions.

The earliest reference to maritime activities in India is contained in the *Rig Veda*. "Do thou whose countenance is turned to all sides send off our adversaries, as if in a ship to the opposite shores: do thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare" (*Rig Veda* 1, 97, 7 and 8). Hindu mythology is replete with episodes pertaining to the ocean, the sea and the rivers. Lord Vishnu, the preserver in the Hindu Trinity, is said to be reclining on *Adi Sessa*, the serpent, in the midst of the primordial ocean. In the perennial fight between the forces of good and evil, symbolised by the *Devas* and the *Asuras* respectively, the two sides used *Adi Sessa* and the sacred mountain *Meru* to churn the primordial ocean. Our rivers have always been taken to represent goddesses.

There is also plenty of evidence derived from Indian literature and art, including sculpture and painting, besides the evidence of archaeology to suggest the antiquity of the Indian maritime tradition. Archaeological evidence in the form of a seal with the representation of a boat and the dockyard at *Lothal*, dates back our maritime tradition to *circa* 2500-1700 B.C. The early growth of Indian shipping and shipbuilding along with the commercial acumen of our merchant class, the courage and fortitude of our sailors, helped India to sail the oceans for many centuries. From about the 15th century onwards there was a decline in India's maritime activity till the emergence of *Khanaji Angre* at the beginning of 18th century. He was a *Maratha* Admiral whose name is now legend in our naval history.

The origins of the Indian Navy lay in a group of ships belonging to the *East India Company* arriving in *Surat* on Sept. 5, 1612. However, they only acquired combatant status on May 1, 1830 when by warrant from the Lord High Admiral, they came under the British Crown and the Service was named the Indian Navy. The name Indian Navy changed to *Bombay Marine*, *Indian Marine*, *Royal Indian Marine* and *Royal Indian Navy* from 1863 onwards till it became the Indian Navy once again on January 26, 1950.

Barring a few publications by eminent historians on the subject of our maritime past there is inadequate awareness of our nautical history, although a great deal of recorded material does exist in our country. This needs to be researched by scholars. However, it was felt that the happenings in the im-

mediate past, particularly the period between 1945 and 1950 should be researched and made a subject of a book immediately. An official history of the activities of the Royal Indian Navy during World War II already exists and so the present volume picks up the threads from this period onwards. However, as an Introduction to this history, the author has also given an insight to India's rich maritime past.

A great deal of material has been systematically collated to record the important historical happenings during these formative years of Independent India's Navy. We were fortunate to have found Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh, AVSM (Retired) to undertake this task under the guidance of an Editorial Board comprising Vice Admiral K.K. Nayyar, Rear Admiral O.P. Sharma and myself.

Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh has dug out a great deal of material and interviewed various personalities of the contemporary period seeking their views on the then prevailing conditions and the emergence of the Indian Navy. In subsequent volumes we intend to cover the later developments in the Service.

In the centuries ahead the oceans around us will undoubtedly have a larger significance both from the point of view of India's security concerns as well as economic development. It is appropriate, therefore, that we inculcate amongst our countrymen an awareness of the oceans. This volume will hopefully contribute its bit in this direction.

This project was started in early 1982 under the direction of one of my predecessors, Admiral R.L. Pereira. My immediate predecessor Admiral O.S. Dawson lent it the support it deserved. It just happens to be my good fortune to be in the driving seat of our Navy to write this foreword.

I would like to place on record our deep appreciation of the work done by Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh and the assistance of my colleagues on the Editorial Board.

Navy House
New Delhi
December 4, 1985

R.H. TAHILIANI
Admiral

Preface

IN THE PROCESS of getting an official history of the 1971 Indo-Pak War prepared, I was invited to compile the Post-World War II history of the Indian Navy commencing with the period 1945-1950. This period has been chosen because some publications recording events of some of the earlier periods, already exist and are available.

Regrettably, however, there are far too many, gaps and grey areas even if it were possible to locate all that has been written about our Service since the beginning of this century. There is even less material available on the earlier period—of the evolution of our Service from the Indian Marine, Bombay Marine, Bombay Marine Corps, Indian Navy, Bombay Marine-Bengal Marine, (non-combatant), His Majesty's Indian Marine (a combatant force with two Divisions at Bombay and Calcutta), Royal Indian Marine (combatant, reversion to a non-combatant role and again combatant), and Royal Indian Navy. Very little is known about our various regional maritime forces which fought amongst themselves, kept invaders at bay, and projected our maritime and commercial interests and culture to distant lands. This paucity of material only refers to publications in the English language. There are many publications in various Indian and foreign languages and undoubtedly, several documents must exist in these languages which could throw more light on our little-known ancient maritime past. We do, however, have an official publication covering the organisation and operational role of the RIN during the 1939-45 War.

Though my charter was limited to a specific period, I have included a chapter on India's maritime history. This, in a preliminary way, brings out our rich maritime past including shipbuilding in India, and our exploitation and subjugation by the Western Powers—the Portuguese, French, Dutch and the British. During the period we were ruled by foreigners, our maritime projection was obviously what our rulers wished and directed. Undoubtedly, therefore, our role in the First and Second World Wars was totally linked to the British Empire's role and interests in the region.

The span of this study is less than six years—from V.J. Day on August 15, 1945 to the end of the decade, December 31, 1950. It has, however, not been possible to strictly adhere to these specific dates and in many of the chapters, earlier and later events have had to be necessarily recorded to provide some basic links.

This period is indeed very significant and far-reaching events took place during this short span. It saw the end of the 1939-45 War, followed by the contraction of the Royal Indian Navy with the attendant rushed demobilisation. Close on its heels, the Royal Indian Navy had the traumatic experience of the Mutiny in February 1946. A little over a year later, with Independence came the division of the Royal Indian Navy into the Royal Indian Navy and Royal Pakistan Navy. We continued to rely on the Royal Navy for its assistance for quite a few years in the form of loan service of officers to man appointments at various levels including Chiefs of the Naval Staff. We were the last of the three Defence Services to have an Indian as Chief of Staff—eleven years after our Independence.

A little-known fact today is that until January 26, 1950, the Royal Indian Navy was the seniormost of the three Defence Services in India; the last visible evidence of this was the ribbon of the 1939-45 Star, commonly known as the "Chowringhee Star", where the priority order of display is dark blue (Navy), red (Army) and light blue (Air Force). The last naval officer who wore this ribbon on his chest retired in November 1984.

In collecting material for this book I had the good fortune of meeting many shipmates, Service colleagues and friends—both Indian and British—who, like me, spent many happy decades in the Royal Indian Navy/Indian Navy; they were kind enough to render testimony to many subjects, which proved invaluable. Through their help and kindness, I was also able to collect some valuable material including photographs covering very significant events and some of them find a place in this volume. I was fortunate to interview some eminent personalities who played a significant role in the national scene at that time and later.

I would have liked to meet some former colleagues who served in the undivided Royal Indian Navy and who went to the newly created Royal Pakistan Navy in August 1947. The first (then) Indian to be admitted to the Executive cadre of the Royal Indian Marine in 1931 was Cadet H.M.S. Choudri who later rose to the rank of Vice Admiral and retired as the Chief of the Naval Staff of the Pakistan Navy. It would have been useful and interesting to obtain the testimony of some of these colleagues, particularly as they were part and parcel of the same Service until 1947 and fought shoulder-to-shoulder in the past for a common foreign regime!

SATYINDRA SINGH
Rear Admiral (Retd.)

Acknowledgements

To Admiral R.H. Tahiliani, PVSM, AVSM, goes my expression of deep gratitude. It was he, who selected me for the privileged task of writing this volume. Without his generous assistance and encouragement throughout, it would not have been possible to undertake this task.

I am most grateful to Vice Admiral K.K. Nayyar, PVSM, AVSM, for his guidance and help and valuable suggestions based on deep study. I also wish to express my gratitude to Rear Admiral O.P. Sharma, AVSM, VSM, for his unstinted assistance throughout the period I was engaged on this project.

In the Historical Cell, I received valuable assistance from Captain G.S. Sen. Lieutenant Commander R.S. Narang, at present in-charge of Historical Cell, has been of considerable help in several ways. The indefatigable Petty Officer P.V. Kumar, who was in the Historical Cell for most of the period, was of invaluable secretarial assistance. I also wish to thank Mr. R.K. Malhotra for patiently undertaking the laborious task of typing.

To Commander D.J. Hastings, OBE, RINVR (Retd.), Honorary Secretary and Archivist of the Royal Indian Navy (1612-1947) Association, with whom I spent some days in England in October 1984, is due a special word of thanks. I acknowledge with gratitude the great pains he took to provide me with valuable material which I could not have obtained elsewhere.

SATYINDRA SINGH
Rear Admiral (Retd.)

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Division of the Royal Indian Naval

INDIA

SLOOPS

HMIS Sutlej
HMIS Jumna
HMIS Kistna
HMIS Cauvery

FRIGATES

HMIS Tir
HMIS Kukri

CORVETTES

HMIS Assam

MINESWEEPERS

HMIS Orissa
HMIS Deccan
HMIS Bihar
HMIS Kumaon
HMIS Rohilkhand
HMIS Khyber
HMIS Carnatic
HMIS Rajputana
HMIS Konkan
HMIS Bombay
HMIS Bengal
HMIS Madras

SURVEY VESSEL

HMIS Investigator

TRAWLERS

HMIS Nasik
HMIS Calcutta
HMIS Cochin
HMIS Amritsar

MOTOR MINESWEEPERS

MMS 130
MMS 132
MMS 151
MMS 154

MOTOR LAUNCH

ML 420

HARBOUR DEFENCE MOTOR

LAUNCHES

HDML 1110
HDML 1112
HDML 1117
HDML 1118

ALL EXISTING LANDING CRAFT

which one?

Fleet on August 15, 1947

PAKISTAN

SLOOPS

HMPS Narbada
HMPS Godavari

FRIGATES

HMPS Shamsher
HMPS Dhanush

MINESWEEPERS

HMPS Kathiawar
HMPS Baluchistan
HMPS Oudh
HMPS Malwa

TRAWLERS

HMPS Rampur
HMPS Baroda

MOTOR MINESWEEPERS

MMS 129
MMS 131

HARBOUR DEFENCE MOTOR LAUNCHES

HDML 1261
HDML 1262
HDML 1263
HDML 1266

Evolution

Date	Title
December 31, 1600	East India Company founded by Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I
September 5, 1612	Indian Marine formed when a squadron of ships arrived in <u>Swally</u> , the roadstead off Surat. (Also known as the 'Honourable East India Company's Marine')
1686	The Bombay Marine
May 1, 1830	The Indian Navy (by Warrant from the Lord High Admiral, Prince William)
1858	Her Majesty's Indian Navy
April 30, 1863	The Bombay Marine (Non-combatant—on expiry of the Honourable East India Company and transfer to the Crown)
1877	Her Majesty's Indian Marine
1892	The Royal Indian Marine
1928	The Royal Indian Marine (Combatant)
October 2, 1934	The Royal Indian Navy
January 26, 1950	The Indian Navy

Abbreviations

ABCD	Atomic Bacteriological and Chemical Damage
AD Corps	Army Dental Corps
AFMS	Armed Forces Medical Service
AMC	Army Medical Corps
BEM	British Empire Medal
BOR	British Other Rank
BTE	Boy's Training Establishment
CB	Companion of the Order of the Bath
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CIE	Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire
CILQ	Compensation in Lieu of Quarters
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CNS	Chief of the Naval Staff
CO	Commanding Officer
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
ETI	Educational Test One
FOB	Flag Officer Bombay
FOCRIN	Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy
FRU	Fleet Requirement Unit
'G'	Gunner
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC-in-C	General Officer Commanding-in-Chief
HDML	Harbour Defence Motor Launch
HET	Higher Educational Test
HM	His/Her Majesty
HMIS	His/Her Majesty's Indian Ship
HMS	His/Her Majesty's Ship
HO	Hostilities Only
IAF	Indian Air Force
IAMC	Indian Army Medical Corps
IDSS	Indian Defence Science Service
IDSM	Indian Distinguished Service Medal
IMD-BC	Indian Medical Department—British Cadre

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HO	Hostilities Only
IAF	Indian Air Force
IAMC	Indian Army Medical Corps
IDSS	Indian Defence Science Service
IDSM	Indian Distinguished Service Medal
IMD-BC	Indian Medical Department—British Cadre

IMS	Indian Medical Service
IN	Indian Navy
INA	Indian National Army
INS	Indian Naval Ship
IOR	Indian Other Rank
IOM	Indian Order of Merit
ISDPS	Inter-Service Demobilisation Planning Staff
JSW	Joint Services Wing
Kt	Knight
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
KCBE	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire
KCSI	Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India
KDF	Kathiawar Defence Force
LCT	Landing Craft Tank
LCW	Landing Craft Wing
LND	Local Naval Defence
LST	Landing Ships Tank
MA	Medical Assistant
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
ML	Motor Launch
MLR	Money in Lieu of Rations
MTB	Motor Torpedo Boat
MURAF	Maintenance Unit of the Royal Air Force
NAAFI	Navy Army Air Force Institute
NHQ	Naval Headquarters
NOPIN	Naval Operation Indian Navy
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OBI	Officer of the Order of British India
OR's	Other Ranks
RACINS	Rear Admiral Commanding Indian Naval Squadron
RAF	Royal Air Force
RIAF	Royal Indian Air Force
RIM	Royal Indian Marine
RIN	Royal Indian Navy
RINR	Royal Indian Naval Reserve
RINVR	Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve
RN	Royal Navy
RNAS	Royal Naval Air Station
RNR	Royal Naval Reserve
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
SBA	Sick Berth Attendant
SDML	Seaward Defence Motor Launch
SNLR	Service No Longer Required
TAS	Torpedo Anti-Submarine
WRINS	Women Royal Indian Naval Service

1. India's Maritime History

THE INDIAN OCEAN, is named after peninsular India which juts into its centre and occupies a unique position. These vast waters wash the shores of the entire East Coast of Africa, the South Coast of Arabia, the Southern shores of Iran and Baluchistan, the Malaysian Peninsula and Indonesia's Sumatra. The ingress and egress of the ocean are through the eastern and western waterways at the Straits of Malacca and Bab-el-Mandeb. The former lead to the Indonesian Archipelago, the South China Sea, the Far East and the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean while the latter control the entrance to the Red Sea. Commanding the gateway to the land-locked Persian Gulf in the northwest is Hormuz formerly known as Ormuz. For ages, Aden, at the Southern tip of Arabia, was the home and main base of the Arab corsairs. Two off-shoots of this Ocean are the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal which wash the 5600-kilometre-long shores of the Indian peninsula, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma and the island of Sri Lanka which is separated from India by the Palk Strait.

Because of its unique features, the Indian Ocean has always been regarded as an area of great geopolitical significance and India has been regarded as its centre of gravity. Sardar K.M. Panikkar, has said: In spite of the vastness of its surface and the oceanic character of its current and winds, the Indian Ocean has some of the features of a land-locked sea. The Arctic and the Antarctic, circling the Poles have but little connection with inhabited land. The Pacific and the Atlantic lie from the north to the south like gigantic highways. They have no land roof, no vast land area jutting out into their expanse. The Indian Ocean is walled off on three sides by land, with the southern side of Asia forming a roof over it. The continent of Africa constitutes the western wall and Burma, Malaya and the insular continuations protect the eastern side. But the vital feature which differentiates the Indian Ocean from the Pacific or the Atlantic is not the two sides but the subcontinent of India which juts out far into the sea for a thousand miles to its tapering end at Kanya Kumari. It is the geographical position of India that changes the character of the Indian Ocean.¹

The islands in the Indian Ocean area are neither as numerous nor as evenly spread out as those in the Pacific. The major islands² in the region are Sri Lanka and Malagasy while the minor ones are Socotra near the Arab Coast, Zanzibar and Seychelles off the African Coast, Mauritius and Réunion

on the Tropic of Capricorn, Lakshadweep and the Maldives near the West Coast of India, the Bahrain group near the Persian Gulf, the Andamans and the Nicobars in the Bay of Bengal and the Diego Garcia group in the Chagos Archipelago.

Considerable geopolitical significance is also attached to the bays, gulfs and bights of the Ocean. The Persian Gulf which is virtually a land-locked sea with its choke point at Hormuz, the Arabian Sea which separates the Indian and Arabian peninsulas, the Gulf of Aden entry to which is controlled by the island of Socotra, the Red Sea whose gate-post is at Bab-el-Mandeb, the Bay of Bengal separating the Indian and Malaysian peninsulas and the Gulf of Malacca with Singapore commanding entry into it, have all played a significant role in the maritime history of the region.

Because of the unique feature of the monsoons and the development of the nucleus of civilisation around this Ocean, oceanic activity and traditions developed in this region before any other place. Centuries before the development of seafaring activities in the Aegean Sea, the littoral states of peninsular India had already built up their oceanic traditions.

The strategic, naval and geopolitical importance of land-locked countries establishing links with the seas by acquiring sovereignty over waterways or even land corridors has been appreciated by politico-military thinkers for centuries. For instance, the potential of their presence in the Indian Ocean or even in its seas, bays and straits prompted some super powers of today to make attempts to gain access to this ocean over land even in the last century. The British appreciation of the balance of power in and around Asia after World War II and its future plans made during the forties also catered to these contingencies.

What is most striking and little known is the fact that Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the great ruler of the Punjab, had also realised the importance of establishing a link with the sea after his victory over the Pathans and Afghans during the third decade of the last century. To quote a historian, "If the Punjabi empire³ was to expand any further, it could only be across the Sindh desert to the sea or across the Sutlej to India." (The portion of India then held by the British.) The British were clever enough to persuade the Maharaja to sign a commercial treaty in December 1832 and abandon his plans to extend his empire to the sea. These facts and today's rivalry between the super powers over their presence in the Indian Ocean confirm the wisdom of the observation made by Khairuddin Barbarosa,⁴ the Egyptian Admiral centuries ago, "He who rules on the sea will shortly rule on the land also."

Another fact that emerges from a careful analysis of the sequence of events in India's maritime past is that during the last five millennia, those who came over land from other parts of the world, mainly using the mountain passes in the northwest, did rule some parts of the Indian subcontinent for a while but were eventually absorbed in the mainstream of Indian culture and traditions and, over the centuries, became an integral part of the Indian

milleu. Some of these were the Aryans, Pathans, Moghuls, Afghans, Sakas and even the Huns. But those who came by sea during the last two millennia, the Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, Germans, Danes, Flemish, Armenians and the Jews, did not lose their identity and came to stay for hundreds of years, some of them holding sway over larger areas and for longer periods.

India's maritime history can be broadly divided into five distinct periods—the Hindu period extending from the hoary past to the middle of the 15th century A.D., the Portuguese period from the closing years of the 15th century to the end of the 16th century; two British periods—from 1612 to 1830 and from 1830 to 1947; and the Indian period which commenced on August 15, 1947. The British period is divided into two parts because in 1830, the East India Company's Navy in India underwent two major changes; it was constituted as a combatant service and given the name Indian Navy and the first ship of the Service to sail under steam, the 411-ton *Hugh Lindsay*, covered the distance from Bombay to Suez in 21 days thus ushering in the conversion from sail to steam.

The Vedas, Buddhist Jatakas, Sanskrit, Pali and Persian literature, Indian folklore and mythology and even the Old Testament bear testimony to the fact that as far back as the days of Mohen-jo-Daro, Lothal and Harappa (3,000 to 2,000 B.C.), i.e., the Indus Valley Civilisation, there was considerable maritime activity between India and the countries in Africa, Southern Europe, Western Asia and the Far East. Seals and potsherd portraying anchors and tools and kitchen implements made of coral and mussel-shell have been found at these places and Java, Sumatra, Indo-China, Sri Lanka and Egypt. A recently unearthed huge drydock at Lothal in Gujarat further confirms the existence of India's seaborne trade with these countries, especially Sumer, Egypt, Crete and countries in Central Asia and Persia at that time. Late Professor Buhler, the well-known German orientalist, expressed the view that "there are passages in ancient Indian works which prove the early existence of navigation of the Indian Ocean and the somewhat later occurrences of trading voyages undertaken by Hindu merchants to the shores of the Persian Gulf and its rivers."

This fact is further borne out by available works in the languages of the littoral states of the region; such as Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Oriya and Bengali; the writings of foreign travellers and historians—Chinese, Arabic and Persian—which contain observations on Indian subjects; the evidence available from archaeology—epigraphic, monumental and numismatic; and Indian and foreign art and foreign literature—English, Greek, Portuguese, French, Dutch, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Malay, Thai, Burmese and Sinhalese.

Some of the little-known facts about the extent of commercial and cultural influence of India and sea-borne trade using ships built in India during the Hindu period (pre-Christian era to the middle of the 15th Century A.D.) are:

—The *Matsya Yantra*⁵ (the fish machine), an iron fish floating on oil pointing to the north serving as a primitive compass used by Indian sea-

on the Tropic of Capricorn, Lakshadweep and the Maldives near the West Coast of India, the Bahrain group near the Persian Gulf, the Andamans and the Nicobars in the Bay of Bengal and the Diego Garcia group in the Chagos Archipelago.

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milleu. Some of these were the Aryans, Pathans, Moghuls, Afghans, Sakas and even the Huns. But those who came by sea during the last two millennia, the Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, Germans, Danes, Flemish, Armenians and the Jews, did not lose their identity and came to stay for hundreds of years, some of them holding sway over larger areas and for longer periods.

India's maritime history can be broadly divided into five distinct periods—the Hindu period extending from the hoary past to the middle of the 15th century A.D., the Portuguese period from the closing years of the 15th century to the end of the 16th century; two British periods—from 1612 to 1830 and from 1830 to 1947; and the Indian period which commenced on August 15, 1947. The British period is divided into two parts because in 1830, the East India Company's Navy in India underwent two major changes; it was constituted as a combatant service and given the name Indian Navy and the first ship of the Service to sail under steam, the 411-ton *Hugh Lindsay*, covered the distance from Bombay to Suez in 21 days thus ushering in the conversion from sail to steam.

The Vedas, Buddhist Jatakas, Sanskrit, Pali and Persian literature, Indian folklore and mythology and even the Old Testament bear testimony to the fact that as far back as the days of Mohen-jo-Daro, Lothal and Harappa (3,000 to 2,000 B.C.), i.e., the Indus Valley Civilisation, there was considerable maritime activity between India and the countries in Africa, Southern Europe, Western Asia and the Far East. Seals and potsherd portraying anchors and tools and kitchen implements made of coral and mussel-shell have been found at these places and Java, Sumatra, Indo-China, Sri Lanka and Egypt. A recently unearthed huge drydock at Lothal in Gujarat further confirms the existence of India's seaborne trade with these countries, especially Sumer, Egypt, Crete and countries in Central Asia and Persia at that time. Late Professor Buhler, the well-known German orientalist, expressed the view that "there are passages in ancient Indian works which prove the early existence of navigation of the Indian Ocean and the somewhat later occurrences of trading voyages undertaken by Hindu merchants to the shores of the Persian Gulf and its rivers."

This fact is further borne out by available works in the languages of the littoral states of the region; such as Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Oriya and Bengali; the writings of foreign travellers and historians—Chinese, Arabic and Persian—which contain observations on Indian subjects; the evidence available from archaeology—epigraphic, monumental and numismatic; and Indian and foreign art and foreign literature—English, Greek, Portuguese, French, Dutch, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Malay, Thai, Burmese and Sinhalese.

Some of the little-known facts about the extent of commercial and cultural influence of India and sea-borne trade using ships built in India during the Hindu period (pre-Christian era to the middle of the 15th Century A.D.) are:

—The Matsya Yantra⁵ (the fish machine), an iron fish floating on oil pointing to the north serving as a primitive compass used by Indian sea-

farers for several millennia (as per Hindu mythology, Matsya was the first incarnation of Lord Vishnu).

— The names of some of the places in Southern and southeast Asia such as Socotra which is a derivative of Sukhadhara (container or island of happiness); Sri Lanka which originally was Swarna Alankar (gold ornament), Nicobar which was derived from Nak-Dweep (the island of the naked) and Calicut which originally was Kallikote (in Kannada a stone-fort);

— Reference to Indians as Klings in Thailand and Telangs in some parts of Burma because of the conquests of these countries by the Kalingas and Andhras several millennia ago;

— The similarity between the Thai and Oriya scripts due to the long Kalinga rule over Thailand;

— The scriptures in a Buddhist temple in Japan which are recited by the monks every morning even today being in the 6th Century A.D. Bengali script; and

— The transfer by sea of the weary, tired and demoralised army of Alexander the Great from the mouth of the Indus to the shores of the Persian Gulf in 323 B.C. in about 800 Indian-built sailing vessels.

During this period, while the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean were used mainly for purposes of maritime trade, the Bay of Bengal provided a highway for the countries on the Eastern seaboard to embark on proselytising, cultural and colonising missions to Sri Lanka and countries as far as the East Indies and Japan.

During the Hindu period, considerable maritime activity took place in the waters around India. As described by Megasthenes,⁶ the royal shipyards of the Mauryas built seagoing ships of various classes. The War Office of Emperor Chandragupta had, as one of its six boards, a Nav Parishad (Board of Admiralty) which controlled national shipping. During the days of Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century B.C., his sister, Princess Sanghamitra⁷ sailed from Tamralipta in Bengal to Sri Lanka on her historic mission of spreading Buddhism there. Ashoka also had a strong seagoing fleet and regular commercial intercourse with Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia and Epirus. Between 200 B.C. and A.D. 250, the Andhras carried out maritime trade with Western Asia, Greece, Rome, Egypt, China and some other Eastern countries and had even set up embassies in some of these countries. Roman coins discovered in India, especially in the South, establish the existence of trade between these countries even before the Christian era. Persecution at the hands of the Romans forced some Jews to flee Rome and take refuge in Malabar in A.D. 68. Larger sailing vessels built by the Cholas, Pandyas and the Keralas of South India and the Kalingas of Orissa were used for trade, passenger traffic and naval warfare. These ships were considered excellent for navigation across the oceans as their lower parts were reinforced with triple planks in order to enable them to withstand the force of tempests. Some of the leading communities in organising sea-borne commerce were the Manigramman Chetties, Namdasis, Valangais and Elangais

of South India. It is a fact of history that during the first decade of the seventh century, a ruler of Gujarat who was faced with defeat at the hands of his enemy, sent his son with thousands of followers comprising cultivators, artisans, warriors, physicians and writers in over 100 vessels to Java where they laid the foundation of a new civilisation whose contribution to the world is the temple and sculptures of Borobudur.⁸

The Cholas (A.D. 985-1054) maintained a strong naval fleet on the Coromandel Coast. The Chola emperors⁹ Rajaraja I and Rajendra I had strong armadas which were used to capture Sri Lanka and in A.D. 1007 the Cholas launched an expedition against the Sri Vijayas, who at that time ruled the Malayan Peninsula, Java, Sumatra and some neighbouring islands and the sea areas contiguous to them, and defeated them to establish Chola power in the Malayan Peninsula.

Evidence from various sources confirms the existence of trade in various commodities between India and Europe for at least three millennia. India maintained trade relations with the Phoenicians, Jews, Assyrians, Greeks, Egyptians and Romans during the earlier centuries and with the Turks, Venetians, Portuguese, Dutch and English during the later part of the period. While India imported few items such as tin, lead, glass, amber, steel for arms, coral and medicinal drugs from Europe and West Asia, Arabia supplied frankincense to India for use in her temples. The items exported to Europe, North Africa and West Asia included wool from the fleeces of sheep bred on the northwestern mountain ranges, armour, onyx, chalcedony, lapis lazuli, jasper, resinous gum, furs, asafoetida, musk, balm, myrrh, embroidered woollen fabrics, coloured carpets, silk (considered most valuable and exchanged by weight with gold), various types of cotton cloth ranging from coarse canvas and calicoes to muslins of the finest texture, peacocks, apes, oils, brassware, ivory, ebony, pearls, sugar cane extracts, salt, indigo, drugs, dyes, rice, sandalwood, timber for building ships, aromatics, pepper, cinnamon and edible spices which were, during the later years, mainly traded for precious metals, especially gold.

Interrelation is further confirmed by the fact that the word for peacock is "tuki" in Hebrew and "tokei" in Tamil and by the adoption of Tamil words by the Greeks and vice-versa. There was considerable sea-borne commercial intercourse between Greece and South India during the Hindu period affirmed by the fact that the words for rice, ginger, cinnamon and foreign merchants in Greek and Tamil respectively are cryza and arisi, zingibar and inchivar, karpion and karava and Iaones and Yavana. In April A.D. 800, as described in the 199th Chapter of the Japanese document Ruijukokushi,¹⁰ an Indian was cast up on the shores of Japan and some seeds of the cotton-plant, so far unknown to that country, were found on his ship and sown in the provinces of Kii, Awaji, Sanuki, Jyo, Tosa and Kyushu. Thus cotton was introduced into Japan.

There is evidence of Herodotus (450 B.C.) who wrote about the (cotton) garments worn by the Indian contingent of Xerxes Army which had been

woven from "the wool which certain mild trees in India bear instead of fruit that in beauty and quality excels that of sheep." Thus, it was India that introduced the use of cotton to Europe, West Asia and the Far East.

One of the most sensational discoveries that helped maintain trade between India and the West was that of the regularity of the seasonal winds of the southwest monsoon by a Greek named Hippalus¹¹ in A.D. 45. His discovery helped him in finding a direct route to Malabar which was far shorter than the older coast-hugging route. Toward the end of the summer months, "ships used to depart from the mouth of the Arabian Gulf or Kane on the coast of Arabia Felix and sail straight in 40 days to Muziris (modern Kodungallur) on the West Coast of India. They began their homeward voyage in December by sailing with the North-East Wind, enter the Arabian Gulf, meet with a South or South-West Wind and thus complete the voyage by using the trade winds throughout the period." The discovery of the directions and regularity of the monsoon air current was a major contributing factor towards the continuance of maritime trade between India and the Western countries over the centuries.

That oceanic navigation was well advanced during the earlier centuries of the Christian era is further borne out by the writings of the celebrated Chinese monk, Fa Hien¹² who came to India overland to study Buddhism at Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Varanasi in A.D. 413. On his way back to his home land he sailed from Tamralipta in Bengal and 14 days later reached Sri Lanka where he embarked for Java and called at the Nicobars before passing through the Straits of Malacca to reach the Pacific.

Hindu supremacy over the Eastern waters reached its zenith during the period of 5th to 12th centuries when the Sri Vijaya¹³ Empire ruled the entire sea area between India's eastern seaboard and the Far East. The Sri Vijayas' cultural and colonising expedition took them to such far-flung areas as Sumatra, Burma, the Malayan Peninsula, Java, Thailand and Indo-China. Besides spreading Hindu culture, they maintained regular political and commercial intercourse with the Cholas, Pandyas and Keralas. As a result of jealousy between the Cholas, the Tamil Kings, and the Sri Vijayas, however, a series of sea battles were fought between their navies toward the end of the 10th century A.D. resulting in the weakening of these empires and opening the way for Arab supremacy in the region. About the same time, the rulers of Gujarat and Calicut also maintained large fleets of sailing vessels for commercial purposes which sailed with cargoes of silk carpets, precious stones, pearls, ivory, spices and other valuable goods to Europe and West Asia. With the weakening of the Indian rulers, their sea-borne trade routes passed into the hands of the Arabs who became great intermediaries of maritime commercial intercourse between the two regions.

During this period the Arabs acted as a link between the East and Europe and used to pass the Indian merchandise to the Venetians who supplied the Indian goods to the European markets where they were in great demand. The Venetians soon became immensely prosperous which aroused the jea-

lousy and cupidity of the seafarers of the Iberian nations, i.e., Spain, Portugal and other Mediterranean countries, and the quest for a direct passage to India began.

For several millennia ships had been traversing the Indian Ocean carrying valuable merchandise and cultural emissaries between India and the West. Cities that directly engaged in the maritime trade or stood on the ancient trade routes continued to grow in importance and prosperity. Some of these centres of commerce were ancient Chaldea, Babylon, Nineveh, Ophir, Tadmor and the ports in the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The Phoenicians had for some years arrogated to themselves a major share in the Mediterranean trade but were later driven out of it by the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans but the Arabs continued to hold away over the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea.

Egypt, during the days of the Ptolemies,¹⁴ developed Alexandria into the most important port in the world. One of the Ptolemies, Ptolemy Philadelphus was planning to construct a canal between the Red Sea and the Nile, a hundred cubits wide and thirty cubits in depth, in order to transport Indian goods to Alexandria wholly by water but, for reasons not known, this project was never undertaken and hence a new port called Berenike was developed on the Western shore of the Red Sea. Ships from India carried merchandise, sailing from Tatta at the head of the lower delta of the Indus or other ports on the West Coast to the coast of Persia and after following the Arabian shore to Berenike. From Berenike, the goods were carried overland to the city of Koptos, which was very close to the Nile, where they were loaded into ships which navigated along a canal to Alexandria. Carthagian merchants carried Indian goods to all Mediterranean ports. During the period of Egyptian supremacy, the northern countries of Europe received Indian goods which were carried overland from India to Oxus from where they went to the regions bordering the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea.

After its conquest of Carthage, Egypt and Syria, the Roman Empire monopolised trade with India for many years and Alexandria continued to be the principal port for Indian merchandise. The conquest of Persia and Egypt by the Mohammedans later, however, deprived the European countries of the use of Alexandria for trade and access to Indian merchandise. Basra was founded at the head of the Persian Gulf and became as important a trading centre as Alexandria, controlling the movement of merchandise in both the easterly and westerly directions.

The Arabs later gained control of the trade routes and stopped supplying Indian goods to the sea ports of the Mediterranean but the overland route to Constantinople provided the alternative for carrying Indian products to the European trade centres. In fact, Constantinople became the focal point for the movement of merchandise between Europe and India.

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time in our maritime history. With the annexation of Constantinople and trading routes to India by the Turks towards the end of the 15th century and with the continued piracy on the Alexandrian trade route by the Egyptians, a new pattern of rivalry involving South European, North African and West Asian countries over trade with the East emerged. Since mastery over these trade routes had a direct bearing on the power and prosperity of these nations, an alternative route to India was sought to be established by some of these countries which already had centuries of seafaring experience and expertise.

The quest for an alternative route hugging the coasts of Africa and Asia led to the sailing down the West Coast of Africa by the Portuguese Navigator, Bartholemy Diaz in 1487 and the discovery of the Cape of Tempests,¹⁵ later to be renamed the Cape of Good Hope. Vasco da Gama was deputed by King Manoel of Portugal in July 1497, five years after the discovery of the West Indies by Columbus, to complete the work done by Diaz. The King's astrologer, Abraham Ben Zakut,¹⁶ having studied his horoscope and having found it favourable for the discovery of the sea route to India, there were high hopes of success in the venture. Four ships, the *Sao Gabriel* (120 tons) commanded by Vasco da Gama, the *Sao Raphael* (100 tons) commanded by his brother Paulo da Gama, the *Berrio* (50 tons) under the command of Nicolas Coelho and a 200-ton store ship set sail from Belem on March 25, 1497. A violent storm was encountered while rounding the Cape and the crew, which wanted to go back, plotted a mutiny but Vasco da Gama succeeded in suppressing the mutiny by arresting the ring-leaders and threatening to throw them overboard. In March 1498, *Sao Gabriel* and *Sao Raphael* reached Mozambique, the store ship having returned to Portugal after transferring her stores and the *Berrio* having been found not seaworthy and broken up to repair the other ships. Vasco da Gama now needed a pilot to take him across the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea to India and found one in the Moorish Broker, Davane, from Gujarat who was an experienced pilot and knew the seas contiguous to Africa, West Asia and India very well. His expert pilotage not only provided security from the jealous Arabs but also helped Vasco da Gama to proceed to Melinde from where the ships sailed on August 26, 1498. Had Davane not assisted Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese would not have reached India for some more decades which probably would have changed the course of India's maritime history.

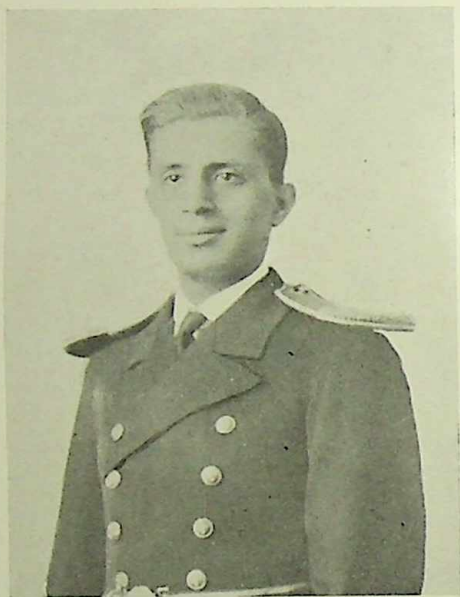
While the discovery of the sea route¹⁷ to India by da Gama was of no great significance, especially when compared to the feats of Columbus and Magellan, the importance of his achievement lies in the fact that while the seas were regarded by the Arabs as a pathway for carrying out maritime trade, the Portuguese were the first to lay claim to sovereignty over these waters and using them as an instrument for the projection of their national policy. This claim was further sanctified by the Bull of Pope Calixtus III which considered the seas they sailed to be their possession. The Portuguese thus began considering themselves to be lords of the seas and thought they



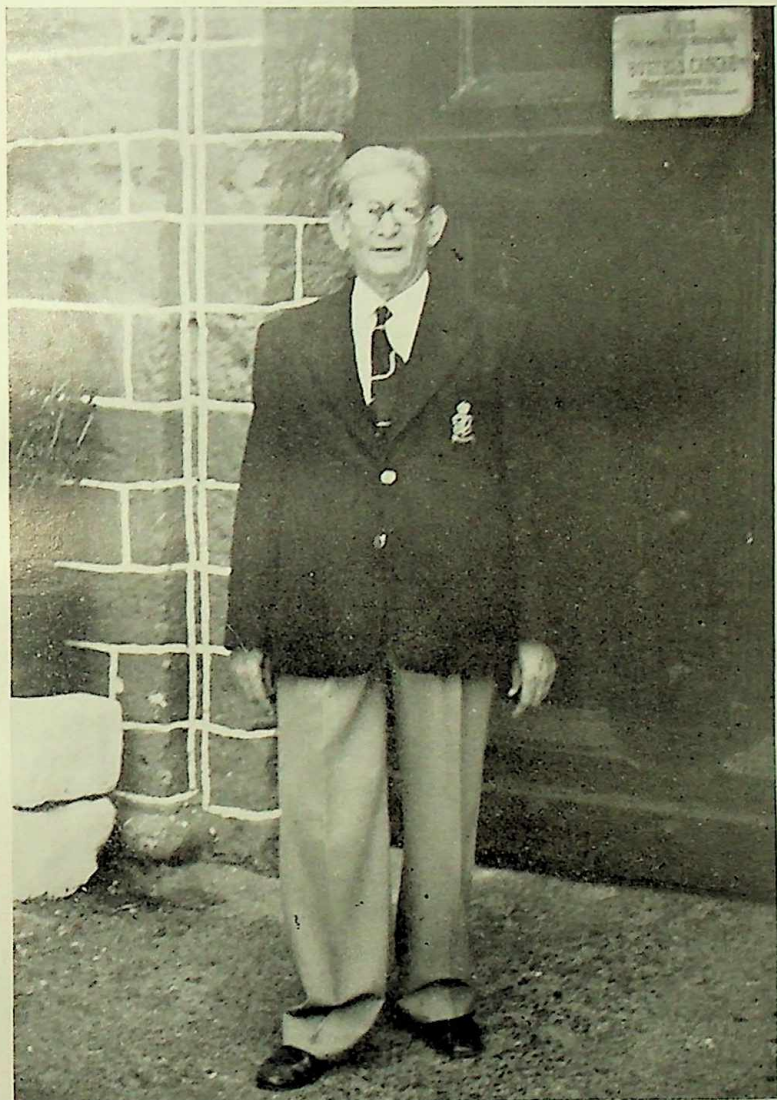
Lieutenant H.R. Bowers of the Royal Indian Marine, who accompanied the Antarctic explorer Captain Scott in his expedition to the South Pole in 1910 and perished, along with him, on his way back. Bowers was the first representative of the Indian subcontinent to set foot on the South Pole. Photograph: courtesy of Commander R.S. Borner RNVR (retd.).

Lieutenant Ram Charan, who was a meteorologist in the Indian Navy, was the first Indian to visit Antarctica when he accompanied an Australian polar expedition in 1960. He died in a road accident in 1961.





Engineer Sub-Lieutenant D.N. Mukerji, the first Indian to join the Royal Indian Marines. He was commissioned on January 6, 1928.



Lieutenant Commander B.K. Shroff, RINVR (retd.) better known as "Pigeon Shroff".

The Commandant of the Japanese forces in the Andamans arrives on board *HMIS Narbada* to surrender (August 1945).



The barge of the Japanese Commandant alongside *HMIS Narbada*.

were justified in confiscating the merchandise of all ships that sailed without their authority. K.M. Panikkar is fully justified in saying, "It may truly be said that India never lost her independence till she lost command of the sea in the first decade of the 16th century."

The Portuguese claim to sovereignty of the seas and da Gama's strong attitude at the Court of the Zamorin of Calicut displeased the latter and the challenge to the ruler's limited sea power led to a series of indecisive skirmishes and sea battles off the coast of Malabar in the years that followed. The Portuguese intruders were detested by the Arab traders who joined hands with the Zamorin and in 1500 when Admiral Pedro Cabral bombarded Calicut, 80 ships of the Zamorin, manned by 1500 intrepid sailors and reinforced by the ships of a rich Arab trader, Khoja Amber, drove him away to Cochin. Two indecisive battles¹⁸ were fought off Cochin in 1503 and off Chaul in 1508. In 1509 the next battle of importance was fought off Diu when ships of the Zamorin, under the command of the courageous Kassim and reinforced by an Egyptian fleet under Admiral Mir Hussain, fought against a strong Portuguese force led by Den Francesco d'Almeida. This battle also produced no decisive result because of the treachery of the Sultan of Gujarat which led to the Egyptian fleet sailing away in disgust. The Indian Ocean was thereafter dominated by the Portuguese, and Albuquerque, the great commercial empire-builder and statesman, helped in firmly establishing Portuguese supremacy over the area.

Mention must be made here of the outstanding role played by the Zamorin's fleet which, under the leadership of the Ali Marakkars, gave valiant battle to the Portuguese for well over 90 years. The Marakkars¹⁹ who had their headquarters at Ponnani, a natural harbour South of Calicut, held sway over the waters around Calicut. The most illustrious name in the family of the Ali Marakkars was that of Kunjali Marakkar II who sank a number of Portuguese ships (the tally in a particular year being 50) and struck terror in the hearts of the Portuguese forces. For some reasons, however, Kunjali III (Mohammed Kunjali Marakkar) who was the last of the Kunjali Admirals and had won many a battle against the Portuguese, fell out with the Zamorin. This led to the weakening of the Zamorin's fleet and its capitulation to the Portuguese. The main contribution of the Kunjalis during the 16th century was that for over 90 years they kept the Portuguese at bay and harassed their fleet thus preventing them from carrying out incursions into the land areas of the subcontinent.

Having failed to defeat the Zamorin, Albuquerque²⁰ seized Goa and its surrounding areas in 1510. Operating from Goa which occupied a commanding position in the prevailing scenario, Albuquerque hounded the Arab traders out of their favourite haunt, subdued the Sultan of Ormuz and relegated him to the level of a vassal of the Portuguese ruler, developed Socotra into a powerful naval base with a well-defended fort, established a strong government in Cochin after bypassing the Zamorin and brought immense power and wealth to his country by exercising mastery over the Arabian Sea. In

1513, he mustered a strong naval force and seized and fortified the Straits of Malacca. He also established amicable relations with the ruler of Pegu, who controlled the Arakan Coast, after prolonged negotiations with him.

Portuguese supremacy over the waters around India was thus established and reached its zenith during the days of Albuquerque. But in 1580, when Portugal joined hands with Spain and the Spanish Armada suffered a crushing defeat, it changed the course of events around the globe, one of its offshoots being the decline of Portuguese supremacy in the Indian region. It is a moot point that if the Spanish Armada had triumphed, the United States could in all probability have become a Latin American country and India a Portuguese dominion!

The sudden change in the power equation was first exploited by the Dutch²¹ and the Dutch East India Company was formed at Amsterdam in 1592. The first merchant fleet of the Dutch reached India in 1595 but they did not challenge the Portuguese supremacy. Instead, they occupied Java and established a naval base at Batavia. Meanwhile, the British and the French also decided to benefit from fishing in our troubled waters and came to India during the earlier years of the 17th Century. It is thus apparent that while the Hindus controlled the trade routes until the beginning of the 15th Century, the Arabs took over the main bulk of it from them for a while with a short period of overlap. But supremacy over these routes passed into Portuguese hands towards the end of the 15th Century. The Portuguese then reigned unchallenged for nearly a century till the defeat of the Spanish Armada and then the sun of the British maritime power rose over Indian horizons and the Indian Ocean during the first decade of the 17th Century.

The Mughal ruler, Akbar²² had a fairly strong Navy but its main component was a fleet of ships and craft based at Dacca which were used for operations in rivers and creeks for the protection of deltaic South Bengal from the *Magh* (Burmese) and *Feringhee* (half-caste) pirates who had the support of the Arakan rulers. He had an Admiralty which looked after the supply of ships and smaller craft, recruitment of suitable personnel for the ships and craft, security of rivers and waterways and collection of port revenue. The Mughals, however, did not appreciate the importance of building up a blue-water navy and developing sea-borne trade and commerce. Shipping and shipbuilding, ocean-going and riverine, however, flourished during the Mughal days in various parts of India such as Bengal, Kashmir, Lahore and Surat and there is evidence available to establish the high standard of technology maintained in the construction of these ships and craft.

Aurangzeb's navy was superior in size and efficiency to that of Akbar. Besides naval ships, he had four ships at Surat for carrying Haj pilgrims free of cost to Mecca but the lack of adequate sea-going naval ships caused the loss of some of his bigger ships to British pirates.

By a Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I, the Honourable Company of the Merchants Trading to the East Indies, better known as the East India

Company,²³ was founded by the British on December 31, 1600 and a ship of the Company, the *Hector*, with Captain Hawkins as the Commanding Officer, arrived in Surat bringing a letter to Emperor Jehangir requesting for permission to trade with India. Hawkins reached Agra on April 16, 1610 and permission was duly granted and trading facilities promised by the Emperor but the Portuguese did not appreciate the British encroachment on their trade preserves. The British sensed this and sent a squadron of warships, the *Dragon*, *Osiender*, *James* and *Solomon*, under the overall command of Captain Thomas Best, which reached Swally, the roadstead of Surat, on September 5, 1612. This date is regarded by the British as the foundation day of the Royal Indian Navy, as the first arrival of their warships in India and the formation of the Indian Marine took place on this day.

A very interesting fact "discovered" by the late Commander (special) G.E. Walker, who was the Judge Advocate General of the RIN immediately before Independence, is that the Jack flown by the Indian Marine in 1612 was the flag worn by ships on the American side during the War of Independence when they rejected the Union Jack. The Jack of the Indian Marine was thus the first flag of the U.S.A. which over the years developed into the stars and stripes. The Indian Marine Jack had seven red and six white stripes and in the position occupied by the stars today, was displayed the St. George's Cross. This flag forms a part of the insignia of the existing RIN Association in the U.K.

Their monopoly over trade in the region having been challenged by the British, the Portuguese attacked the ships of the Indian Marine on October 29, 1612 with four galleons and forty other craft but had to admit defeat after a protracted battle. They then withdrew leaving the British as masters of the land and sea area around Surat who set up factories and formed a fleet of Indian small craft known as Ghurabs (the British called them Grabs) and Galivats for the protection of their sea-borne commerce²³ from the Portuguese. The sobriquet "The Grab Service" by which the British Indian Navy was known for many years does not necessarily bracket it with the pirates of various nationalities who infested the Indian waters at that time.

The nucleus of the Indian Marine consisted at that time mainly of some warships built in England and a larger number of vessels built in India. The Ghurabs²⁴ were heavy beamy vessels (about 300 tons) of shallow draft and were armed with six 9 to 12-pounder guns while the Galivats were smaller craft (about 70 tons) mounting half-a-dozen 2 to 4-pounders. The crews of these craft consisted mainly of Hindu fishermen from the Konkan Coast.

The second major battle with the Portuguese took place in 1614 in which the Indian Marine emerged victorious and the East India Company was granted further trading rights by Jehangir. In the following year, Sir Thomas Roe was appointed Ambassador from King James I to the Moghul Courts. Merchandise manufactured at the Surat factories started moving by sea to the West for trade with the Persian Gulf ports in 1618. Having had the monopoly of trade in these ports for nearly a century, the Portuguese tried

to block the passage of these ships across the Arabian Sea but were successfully thwarted from doing so by the British who annexed Ormuz from the Portuguese in 1622 and thus began their uninterrupted trade with Persia. This, however, did not deter the Portuguese from seeking another battle at Swally in 1630 where they were defeated once again and a truce was declared leading to the opening of some of the Portuguese ports to the East India Company's ships.

The Dutch had been keeping an eye on the balance of power in this region and in their efforts to consolidate their base at Batavia (now known as Jakarta), they captured the Straits of Malacca in 1641 and drove the Portuguese away from the Eastern gateway to the Indian Ocean. Realising the strategic importance of Colombo as a naval base for operation for the annexation of the Indian mainland, the Dutch then befriended the ruler of Sri Lanka which helped in driving the Portuguese away from Colombo also in 1654. Soon thereafter, they made inroads into the Portuguese bastions on the Malabar Coast. This was rendered even more effective by the main base of the Dutch at Batavia, their control of the Straits of Malacca and the advanced operational base at Colombo. Cochin was captured in 1663. This was further made possible by the British preoccupation with other problems but their friendly relations with Emperor Shahjahan prevented the Dutch from making any forays into the waters around Surat where the British factories were situated. A year later, however, Shivaji, the Maratha ruler, attacked Surat by land but the Britishers repulsed his attack.

Meanwhile, King Charles II²⁵ of England had married Infanta Catherina of Braganza, the Portuguese princess, in 1662 and Bombay was ceded to him as a part of his dowry. The official version of the transfer document described the gift as "the Port and Island of Bombay in the East Indies, together with all the rights, profit, territories and appurtenances thereof whatsoever." Since, however, it was virtually impossible for King Charles II to administer Bombay successfully from England, he transferred it to the East India Company at an annual rental of £ 10 in 1668—one of the most significant events in the history of Bombay.

Despite the advice of his counsellors to the contrary, Sir John Child²⁶ who was appointed the Admiral of the East India Company's land and sea forces between the Persian Gulf and Kanya Kumari in 1685, decided to adopt an aggressive policy towards the Moghuls. Having taken on a far superior force, Child suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of the Moghuls who, with the support of the Sidis' fleet, captured most of Bombay island and besieged Child in the Bombay Castle which is now known as the Naval Barracks. Peace was, however, restored by redeeming Bombay on the payment of £ 15,000 in 1690 and some kind of a reconciliation having been effected between Aurangzeb and the Company. Meanwhile, in 1685 the Indian Marine Headquarters were shifted to Bombay and a year later the Service was rechristened the Bombay Marine.

In 1698, the Danes appeared on the scene and set up their trade after

obtaining the permission of Prince Azimus-shan, grandson of Emperor Aurangzeb. By 1755, they had set up a factory and had hoisted the Danish flag at Serampore. In 1801, the British authorities forcibly seized Serampore but restored it immediately. In 1808, however, a detachment of British troops from Barrackpore occupied Serampore. The Danish East India Company recovered it later but in 1844 transferred all its assets to the British Government and left the country.

The beginning of the 18th century saw the emergence of an Admiral of Shivaji's Maratha Fleet, Kanhoji Angre,²⁷ whose name became a legend during these years and whose exploits are written in letters of gold in the annals of the navies of India. Shivaji was a firm believer in the doctrine²⁸ "Jalaim Jasya, Valaim Tasya" (he who rules the sea is all-powerful) and Tukoji Angre, his Admiral and son, Kanhoji Angre and his descendents, put it to practice. In 1706 the fleet of Kanhoji, menaced and considerably reduced British trade between Bombay and the lower Malabar Coast and captured Colaba from the Sidis. A year later, maritime trade in the Indian Ocean was threatened by Arab pirates operating from Muscat who plundered a large number of ships. Equipped with a fleet of 10 Ghurabs and 50 Galivats, the Maratha Fleet, under the command of Kanhoji Angre, challenged the Arab fleet and drove it away from the Indian Ocean. Thereafter, Kanhoji began establishing mastery over the Konkan Coast by fortifying his base at Gheria (Vijaydurg). This fortress was manned by a specially trained garrison which had been armed and provisioned to withstand severe attacks from land and sea and prolonged periods of blockade. This was further reinforced by a dockyard built on a river front behind the fortress which was equipped to build bigger, stronger and better sea-going vessels for his navy.

The Portuguese by this time having been reduced to an insignificant sea power, along with the Sidis and the British faced a strong challenge from the Maratha Fleet. The size, manouvreability and fire-power of the Maratha Fleet continued to grow and hence the British Council decided to build corvettes for the Bombay Marine which would escort the merchant ships of the Company and protect them from Angre's wrath. This went on for some time and the Governor of Bombay, Charles Boone,²⁹ decided to attack Gheria in 1717 with a strong fleet under the command of Captain Barleu. A bitter engagement followed and the Marathas forced the Company's ships to beat a hasty retreat after inflicting severe damage on their ships and killing a large number of the Company's soldiers and sailors. Undeterred by the near-catastrophe, Charles Boone carried out another attack, this time a surprise one, on Gheria on November 5, 1718 and succeeded in silencing many Maratha guns after a ship-shore artillery engagement. The next day, however, when his forces landed, the Maratha guns which had been strategically positioned to cover the entire beachhead, mowed them down. The British fleet, with the handful of survivors hastily withdrew.

On receiving a petition from the Governor of Bombay for naval reinforcement, the King of England sent four warships under Commodore

Mathews to provide support to the fleet of the Bombay Marine. British and Portuguese ships carried out an attack on Colaba, five miles from Gheria, in October 1722 but even this attempt was successfully repulsed by the Marathas and the attacking forces withdrew after having suffered severe losses of men, guns and ammunition.

Angered by the capture of some of their ships by the Maratha Fleet, the Dutch attacked Gheria³⁰ in 1724 with a powerful squadron of seven men-of-war, each mounting 30 to 50 guns, but they suffered heavy losses and were beaten back.

The success of the Maratha Fleet against bigger and better equipped ships of England, Portugal and Holland and those of the Moghuls and the Arabs stretching over several decades was mainly due to Kanhoji's tactics of using a large number of light, strong and fast craft, adequately equipped, which surrounded the heavier vessels of the enemy and simultaneously attacked them from all sides thus overwhelming the crews of the enemy ships and then boarding them and putting them out of action by scuttling them or setting them on fire.

Having had the unique distinction of maintaining naval supremacy over the sea area off the Konkan Coast for many years, Kanhoji suddenly passed away in 1729, survived by his sons, Sekhoji Angre and Sambhaji Angre.

The British treaty of alliance with the Sidi's to fight the Angres in 1733 was followed by Sambhaji's capture of some British merchant ships on December 16, 1735 which was a heavy blow on British trade. The Peshwas of Poona who were not quite friendly with the Angres, were then wooed by the British and a treaty was signed in 1739. By this time, Maratha control of the seas had extended from Kutch to Cochin and had severely hampered British trade. Meanwhile, in order to build ships at a site closer to the scene of action, the British had set up a naval dockyard³¹ at Bombay in 1735.

A combined operation³² by the British and the Peshwas by land and sea, led by Admiral Watson with his ships and 1400 sailors and Colonel Robert Clive with his army contingent, besieged Gheria and were successful in capturing it and reducing Maratha sea power to nought. It may not be out of place to mention here that Admiral Watson and 50 sailors of the Marine assisted Clive in the Battle of Plassey in 1757.

Some merchants from Ostend, Antwerp and other Flemish towns³³ arrived in Bengal on board a ship laden with merchandise during the second decade of the 18th Century. The Ostend Company was set up in 1722 with the blessings of Nawab Murshid Kuli Khan and a factory was set up in Banki Bazar, south of Chandernagore. They, however, faced considerable opposition from the other European trading communities and the Nawab's Charter was withdrawn in 1727 as a result. Soon thereafter, a naval engagement took place between the Flemish and Nawab's forces and the Flemish merchants, having been defeated, withdrew from India.

Entering the scene to challenge British sea power in the region in 1740

were the French³⁴ and they began their operations by capturing Mauritius and converting it into a strong naval base and then sending a strong fleet into the Bay of Bengal to intercept and capture British merchant ships. The war of Austrian succession in Europe in 1744 saw the British and the French in opposing camps and Dupleix, the French Governor of Pondicherry, decided to act. Having already decided to capture the entire South Indian region, he used the French Fleet, which was under the command of La Bourdonnais, to launch an attack on the British Fleet which was led by Captain Peyton. The French Fleet succeeded in driving the British Fleet up the Hooghly and then, after a brief resistance, captured Madras.

Dupleix, however, did not appreciate the importance of sea power as an essential factor in maintaining supremacy over land areas contiguous to the sea. La Bourdonnais was thus allowed to return to France in 1747 and the British regained the command of the seas around India once again. They also brought six powerful ships and several small craft of Boscawan's Fleet to the Bay of Bengal in 1748 and besieged Pondicherry.³⁵ This siege, however, was not successful but the British continued to make their presence felt by annexing strategic and important regions. One of these was Chandernagore, a French possession, which was captured by Admiral Watson, assisted by Clive, in 1756. Watson died in 1757 and the British Fleet, under the command of Admiral Pocock, attacked Madras. Despite some reverses suffered at the hands of the French, the British land forces took the offensive and defeated them in the Carnatic War while Admiral Pocock defeated the French Fleet under D'Ache which was driven away from the sea leaving the British as the masters of the entire sea area around India.

Peace was, however, short-lived for after a few years of the British annexation of Pondicherry, Admiral Suffren, a redoubtable naval tactician, appeared on the scene with a reinforced French Fleet and attacked the British Fleet which was under the command of Admiral Sir Edward Hughes. A series of encounters ensued but following a treaty between England and France, Admiral Suffren and his Fleet left the area, converting the Indian Ocean into a British lake. The latter half of the 18th century saw the extinction of Portuguese power in India, the British seizure of the island of Salsetta and other Portuguese holdings in India and the British victory over Haider Ali's navy at Honavar and Mangalore.

Both Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan had maintained a fleet mainly to support their operations on land and protect their trade interests abroad. They were formidable adversaries who inflicted a severe defeat on the British and came near to breaking the power of the East India Company.³⁶ But they were confined to the south and did not directly affect the fortunes of India as a whole. Haider Ali was a remarkable man and one of the notable figures in Indian history. He had some kind of a national ideal and possessed the qualities of a leader with vision. Continually suffering from a painful disease, his self-discipline and capacity for hard work were astonishing. He realised, long before others did the importance of sea power and the growing menace

of the British based on naval strength. He tried to organise a joint effort to drive them out and, for this purpose, sent envoys to the Marathas, the Nizam, and Shuja-ud-Dowla of Oudh. But nothing came of this. He started building his own navy and, capturing the Maldivé Islands, made them his headquarters for shipbuilding and naval activities. He died by the wayside as he was marching with his army. His son Tipu continued to strengthen his navy. Tipu also sent messages to Napoleon and to the Sultan in Constantinople. Haider Ali had, however, lamented that he could beat the English on land, but he could not dry up the sea.

One of the other little-known facts of our maritime³⁴ history is that, over two centuries ago, the Germans too made an attempt to establish a footing in Bengal. In 1753, some merchants from Empden, a town in Germany, founded a company, popularly known at that time as the Bengal Company of Empden or the Royal Prussian Bengal Company. The British, the French, the Dutch and the Danes, who had already set up factories on the banks of the Hooghly, combined against the newcomers and orders were issued forbidding their pilots, masters and mates to render any assistance to the Germans. The Moghul Nawab also issued orders to these foreigners asking them to prevent the setting up of a German establishment.

The German ships, the largest of them being the Prince Henry of Prussia, however, arrived and set up a factory near Chandernagore and succeeded in getting the Nawab's approval for carrying on their trade after paying a "nazrana" (gift) on Rs. 5,000 to him.

Faced with bitter hostility from the other European competitors, the Germans failed to expand their trade and could not make any headway toward constructing buildings and warehouses for the purpose. They decided, therefore, to wind up their trade and, by 1760, returned to Germany.

Lord Nelson, when he was only 16, visited Bombay and Calcutta while on board the *Seahorse*, a twenty-gun ship, during its voyage to the 'East Indies' in 1775. The ship reached Bombay on the morning of August 17, 1775 and later visited Calcutta when Nelson contracted some "distressing illness and fevers." He was sent home on board the frigate, *Dolphin* and completely recovered before reaching England. The details of his journey from the Hooghly to Portsmouth are recorded in the book *Nelson* written by Carola Oman.

The shipbuilding yard at Surat had been set up in 1635 during which year the East India Company built four pinnaces and other larger vessels, this being the first record of any of their shipbuilding³⁸ activities in India. The shift to Bombay in 1735 was necessitated by its being safer and closer to the scenes of action. It was Lowjee Nusserwanjee Wadia, ancestor of a long line of famous Parsi master-builders of ships, naval and commercial, who selected the site for the Naval Dockyard which during the course of the next 100 years, proceeded to build not less than 115 war vessels and 144 merchant ships including 84 gun-ships of a total tonnage of over 2,000 for the

Royal Navy. The quality of construction of these ships was of such a high order that they were acclaimed by shipbuilding nations around the globe. It was the Wadias who proved to the world that Indian-built Malabar teak ships were far superior in seaworthiness and withstanding the detrimental effects of the elements than British-built oaken ships. *HMS Trincomalee*, which was built by the Bombay Naval Dockyard in 1817 for the Royal Navy and which saw many battles during the period of her commission, is still in use at Portsmouth as *TS Foudroyant* for training school and college students in seamanship and navigation and is the oldest sail-driven warship afloat today. Her Malabar teak hull and superstructure, despite several major modifications, damages suffered during battles and storms and continuous use for training purposes, is still as good as new and to quote a well-known shipbuilder, "good for another 300 years".

The earlier decades of the 19th century saw the arrival in the Indian waters of pirates belonging to an Arab tribe called the Joasmis.³⁹ They operated from the Arab side of the Persian Gulf covering the coast from Bahrain to Cape Mussendon and, with their headquarters at Ras-el-Khaima, they held sway over the entire Persian Gulf. Originally merchants and pearl-fishers, they now took to piracy. For many years they left the ships of the East India Company alone and attacked only small craft but since the Company ships took no action against the Arab pirates plundering ships and craft belonging to the others, this was interpreted by the Joasmis as a sign of weakness and later they stopped sparing the Company ships.

A fleet of 12 ships of the Bombay Marine, carrying 4,000 men and under the command of Captain Seaton, attacked Ras-el-Khaima⁴⁰ in 1809 and bombarded this focal point of the Joasmis' operations but were beaten back by the well-entrenched Joasmi forces. The squadron of ships had, therefore, to return to Bombay and the Arab pirates continued to seize and plunder the Company's ships. Under the command of Captain Collier, the Company later despatched another fleet of 11 ships with 6,000 men under Major General Sir William Grant Keir. They blockaded the town of Ras-el-Khaima for four days as a result of which Sardar Hasan Bin Rehman, the Joasmi Chief, gave himself up and admitted defeat. The Arabs guaranteed safe passage to British ships in a treaty⁴¹ in 1820 and the East India Company was not subjected to harassment by the Arabs any further.

An interesting fact recorded is that the Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army is probably the only example in the world of a land-based force, having a naval craft as its cap-badge with the motto "Sthal-wa-Jal" (earlier "Khushki-wa-Tari").⁴² This regiment was permitted to adopt the galley as an emblem because it took part in many military expeditions overseas between 1796 and 1824.

Two important events took place in 1829. The Bombay Marine was assigned the new nomenclature, the Bombay Marine Corps, and *Hugh Lindsay*, a ship of the East India Company, was the first to be fitted with a steam engine.

Hugh Lindsay,⁴² a 411-ton ship of the Bombay Marine Corps, steamed out of Bombay on March 20, 1830 and reached the Suez after 21 days of actual steaming averaging a trifle under six knots. Thus began the gradual conversion of the Company's ships from sail to steam which was completed during the next 15 years. The year 1830 also saw another change in the name of the Service—this time to the Indian Navy.

All went well for seven years thereafter when in 1837 a pilgrim ship⁴³ of the East India Company, whilst on passage to Mecca, with a number of rich pilgrims on board, was seized and plundered near Aden. A squadron of the Indian Navy's men-of-war, led by Commander Haines, was then sent to attack Aden but since the Sultan of Aden was in a repentant mood and ready to pay an indemnity of Rs. 3 lakhs, the ships spared Aden and returned to Bombay in 1838. The indemnity promised was, however, never paid by the Sultan and hence the ships returned to Aden in the same year and captured it.

In 1848, during the Anglo-Sikh War, the Indian Navy provided a contingent of 100 ratings and seven officers with their guns to participate in the siege of Multan. This would appear to be the second occasion when the Navy was actively employed for land operations.

In 1852 a strong fleet of the Indian Navy,⁴⁴ under the command of Captain Lynch, attacked and captured Rangoon. The Raja of Burma had refused to be cowed down by the naval might of Lord Dalhousie who was Viceroy of India and his defiance of the authority of the British resulted in his loss of the strategic city of Rangoon. Meanwhile, Persian and Russian seafarers in the Persian Gulf began harassing the Company's ships while they were on passage for maritime trade. A strong fleet of the Indian Navy under Sir Henry Leeke⁴⁵ was sent to deal with the pirates and captured Bushire (Basra) after defeating the Persian Fleet in 1853. Ships of the Indian Navy also assisted those of the Royal Navy in suppressing piracy during the war in the Chinese waters in 1860.

The two highest decorations⁴⁶ ever to be awarded to the personnel of the Indian Navy before Independence were earned during the 1857 uprising and on shore. An Indian Naval Brigade comprising 78 officers and 1740 men were assigned shore service during the uprising. Mister Midshipman Mayo of the 4th Detachment was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery at Dacca. This VC was later presented to the Service and was on display with a photograph of the young officer in the RIM (later RIN) Officers Mess at Bombay. The other recipient of the VC was Mister Acting Master GB Chicken of the 3rd Detachment in recognition of his desperate single-handed defence against an attack by a party of 20 armed men, five of whom were killed by him.

In 1863, a Marine Survey Department, manned completely by naval officers, was started in India which during the next 120 years has developed into a full-fledged Hydrographic Survey Department under free India's Navy.

Before the formation of the Marine Survey Department,⁴⁷ hydrographic

survey was being carried out by the Bombay Marine/Indian Navy itself. In fact, survey work was started in 1772 and officers of the Service surveyed the coastal waters of not only India and the neighbouring countries and islands but also the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the East African Coast, the East Indies, the Philippines, the Pelew Islands in the Pacific, the Chusan Archipelago in the East China Sea and Tasmania in the Far South East. Considering the primitive instruments, the limitations of the ships used by these officers and the dangers of venturing into the unknown, the feats of eminent hydrographers⁴⁸ like Captains McCluer, Ross and Blair would be comparable to the great Arctic explorers.

In 1863 the Indian Navy was reorganised as a non-combatant force with two branches⁴⁹ at Bombay and Calcutta which were renamed the Bombay Marine and the Bengal Marine, naval protection of Indian waters having been taken over by the Admiralty. Their new role was transport of troops and Government stores; maintenance of 'Station Ship' duties at Aden, the Andaman Islands (Port Blair), Burma and Persian Gulf; the maintenance of gun boats on the Irawaddy and Tigris; maintenance of all Government light craft employed for military duties and in the maintenance of light-ships and lighthouses around the Coasts of India and Burma and in the Southern portion of the Red Sea and the Marine Survey of India. The nomenclature was to change again in 1871 when an Indian Defence Force with two ships was constituted and yet again in 1877 when the Government restored the combatant status to the Service and called it His Majesty's Indian Marine with two divisions at Bombay and Calcutta. The Service underwent yet another change in name in 1892 when it was rechristened the Royal Indian Marine.

From 1892 to the outbreak of World War I, the RIM did not make any significant contribution to the maritime history of the country. Before the War, the main tasks assigned to the RIM were marine survey, maintenance of lighthouses and transportation of troops. During the War, however, there were notable exploits of the RIM in various theatres of naval operations. Its ships transported troops, arms, ammunition and stores to Egypt, Iraq and East Africa. While on patrol in the Suez Canal, RIM ship⁵⁰ *Hardinge* fought against the Turks and thwarted their efforts to block the canal. She suffered severe damage and lost one of her funnels but succeeded in preventing the blocking of the canal. RIM ships landed troops in Mesopotamia and its smaller ships, designed for operations in inland waters, rendered excellent service in the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Three other ships, the *Northbrooke*, *Minto* and *Dufferin*, carried out patrolling duties in the Red Sea. While carrying out these duties, the *Minto* called at Jeddah and transported some Haj pilgrims safely back to India. The RIM was once again reverted to its non-combatant role when the War ended in 1918.

The international situation at the end of World War I, shortage of funds and extensive retrenchment adversely affected the RIM. With the task of naval defence of India once again entrusted to the Royal Navy, the combat-

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ant status of the RIM was lost. For the services rendered by the Royal Navy, the Government of India had to pay a staggering sum of £ 100,000 annually to the British Government. The RIM had, therefore, to be reduced to a small force entrusted with minor coastal duties. Most of World War I veterans were demobilised and no reservists were left for calling up during emergencies. This led to the mobilisation of Indian public opinion against the wilful eradication of the country's naval and maritime traditions and a number of committees were appointed to examine the future role of the Service and to make recommendations for suitable changes or expansion to be implemented. The Rawlinson Committee, the last such committee to be appointed, recommended the formation of a small combatant force⁵¹ to suit the needs of the country which was to be controlled by an administrative authority operating from the major port.

Very few Indians joined the Royal Indian Marine at that time though recruitment was open both to the Indians and the British. The first Indian to join the RIM as an officer was Engineer Sub-Lieutenant D.N. Mukerji who was commissioned on January 6, 1928. He rose to the rank of Captain and took premature retirement from service in 1950 and emigrated to England where he is still living.

The frozen continent of Antarctica which straddles the South Pole and where the environment is, literally and metaphorically, as clean and pure as driven snow, had always attracted adventurers and explorers from all parts of the globe. One of them was Lieutenant H.R. Bowers⁵² of the Royal Indian Marine who in 1910 had the distinction of being chosen to accompany the great explorer, Captain Scott, on his expedition to the Antarctic. Even though he was not an Indian, he was the first representative of this subcontinent to embark on an expedition to the South Pole. In the words of Commander G.E. Walker, RINVR, author of *The Historical Background of the Royal Indian Navy*, Lieutenant Bowers had the high honour of being selected as one of the party which made the last great journey to the South Pole itself. Scott wrote of him, "I believe he is the hardest traveller that ever undertook a Polar journey, as well as one of the most undaunted. Never was such a sturdy, active, undefeatable little man."

When only eleven miles from safety, the three survivors of that journey were compelled by a week-long blizzard and the exhaustion of their supplies to give up their march. Scott (one of the last acts of his life) wrote to Bowers' mother, "I write when we are very near the end of our journey, and I am finishing it in company with two gallant, noble gentlemen. One of them is your son. He had come to be one of my closest and soundest friends, and I appreciate his wonderful upright nature, his ability and energy. As the troubles have thickened, his dauntless spirit ever shone brighter, and he had remained cheerful, hopeful and indomitable to the end."

Scott then wrote to his brother-in-law, "There is a piece of the Union Jack I put up at the South Pole in my private kit bag. . . send a small piece to the King and a small piece to Queen Alexandra. . . A third piece is in the RIN

Officers' Mess in Bombay, with the cups and spoons which Bowers carried with him on his journey, and which were found by his dead body in his last camp."

The cups and spoons of Lieutenant Bowers along with the piece of the Union Jack are now on display at the Naval Museum at Bombay.

By sheer coincidence, the first Indian to set foot on Antarctica was also a naval officer, Lieutenant Ram Charan, an officer of the Navy's Education branch and a specialist in meteorology, who accompanied an Australian expedition to the South Pole in 1960. Unfortunately, he died in a road accident in New Delhi in 1961.

The bulk of the personnel who took part in the first Indian expedition to Antarctica, Expedition Gangotri, in 1981 were also from the Indian Navy. Indian Navy also participated in the subsequent expeditions launched in 1982, 1983 and 1984.

The indomitable spirit of adventure of personnel of the Indian Navy has taken the Naval Ensign not only to the frozen continent of Antarctica but also to the top of the world's tallest mountain, the Everest. The intrepid and renowned mountaineer of the Indian Navy, Instructor Lieutenant Commander Manmohan Singh Kohli (later rose to the rank of Captain, Indian Navy) has had the distinction of not only climbing to the highest altitude without oxygen but also of putting nine men atop the peak and hoisting the Naval Ensign on it for the first time in its history.

With the reconstitution of the RIM⁵³ as a combatant force in 1928, the White Ensign was hoisted for the first time in its history on November 11, 1928. The Indian Navy Discipline Bill, based on the recommendations of the Rawlinson Committee, was also taken up by the Legislative Assembly in the same year and, after six years of deliberations, the bill was passed by the Assembly and the Council of States on September 5, 1934.

When the Indian Navy Discipline Bill⁵⁴ was presented to the Indian Legislative Assembly on February 21, 1928, it was presented as a non-contentious measure, of which barely a fortnight's notice was given, as no more was thought necessary.

Mr. Mackworth Young, the Army Secretary, introducing the Bill, gave a brief history of the Service and pointed out that the intention was "to enable India to enter upon the first stage of her naval development and ultimately to undertake her own naval defence." He pointed out that Indians had always been eligible as officers of the RIM, but no qualified candidates had ever applied. One-third of the vacancies would be reserved for Indians in future, provided that suitable candidates offered. (He was asked whether 'one-third' meant only one person—which in fact it did, as there were only three vacancies a year—and he replied, "There will be more than one." It is difficult to understand why he said this.)

Sir Shunmugham Chetty (later became finance minister in independent India) opened the opposition with brilliant speech saying:

"My reason for opposing the present motion is that, without the consent

of this House, the Government of India have decided to create an Indian Navy; necessary legislation was passed by Parliament, and what we are asked to do today is simply to legislate for the discipline of this Indian Navy, which has been created without our consent and without our approval.

"The principles underlying the creation of a Navy are these: firstly, who will pay; secondly, who will officer the Navy; and thirdly what will be the control of the Legislature over the Navy. . . . The question, who will pay is very easily answered: the taxpayer in India will pay."

He then pointed out that the "one-third of the vacancies" amounted to one officer per year, and after considering this in detail, went on, "We will therefore have a Navy which for decades together will be officered entirely by British officers; and I ask the House to consider whether they will be willing parties to the creation of Indian Navy, which, though Indians may not be technically and legally excluded, will take several years to be officered by Indians."

As regards control over the RIN, he said, "I would ask whether the people of India desire to create an Indian Navy over which their control will be exactly identical with the control which this House has over the Indian Army." At this point Mr. Jinnah (later the first Governor-General of independent Pakistan) commented, "Which means nil". "In time of emergency the Indian Navy can be taken over by the British Admiralty with the consent of the Governor-General in Council, not with the consent of the Indian Legislature, not with the consent of the Indian people; and the Governor-General in Council is a subordinate branch of the British Government."

Sir Shunmugham then dealt with the question of control in an extremely able manner, and finished up: "Fortunately for us, we are placed in this situation now: that without the passing by the Indian Legislature of the measure that is now introduced, the Indian Navy cannot come into existence I am sorry to use strong words, but I would conclude by saying that I would not touch the present measure with a pair of tongs."

Many later speakers elaborated and restated the points made by Sir Shunmugham Chetty without adding anything to them; his speech, however, determined the course of the debate.

Munshi Iswar Saran opposed the saddling of India with the cost of a Navy whose expansion they could not control, and ridiculed the argument that at present the Navy "was only a little one," which he said, was like the nurse-maid's excuse for her bastard, in *Mr. Midshipman Easy*.

Sir Henry Gidney ridiculed the one-third reservation for Indians, pointing out ironically that the next step would obviously be to apply the communal rota to the one officer a year to be recruited.

In replying for Government, Mr. Mackworth Young said that if Indian candidates were forthcoming in sufficient numbers, the proportion of the intake would be increased. He pointed out that even the old RIM could be taken over by the Admiralty in times of war—without even the consent of the Governor-General in Council. He said that it was absurd to suppose that

H.M. Government would want to appropriate ships from the RIN in wartime and use them in the Atlantic (how oddly that reads, twenty-two years—and one world war—after it was said!)

When the Bill came up again in 1934 Sir Shunmugham Chetty was the President (“Speaker”) of the House; and although the question of Indianisation was again brought up, the Bill was passed without a division, everyone giving it his blessing at the “consideration” stage.

The Royal Indian Navy thereafter came into being on October 2, 1934 with its separate Naval Headquarters at Bombay under the Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy (FOCRIN).

The Scindia Steam Navigation Company was formed in the early twenties but its maritime activities were virtually limited to coastal trade as overseas contracts granted to the Company were very few. The training ship for cadets, *SS Dufferin*, was acquired by the Indian Mercantile Marine Department in 1926 and started training cadets for the Merchant Navy. A number of small shipping companies came into being during the early thirties which managed to capture a sizable chunk of coastal trade from foreign shipping companies but compared to the volume of exports and imports, the tonnage under the Indian shipping companies was virtually negligible.

Between 1934 and 1939, the Royal Indian Navy was developed into a small and efficient naval force and by the time World War II broke out, the RIN fleet comprised five sloops, a survey vessel, a patrol ship, a depot ship and a large number of small craft. Recommendations were made in 1939 for assigning greater responsibility for the naval defence of India to the RIN by the Chatfield Committee. In order to enable the RIN to carry out these duties, modernisation of the Service was also recommended.

The Chatfield Committee recommendations made in 1939 were based mainly on the proposals put forward by the RIN for the expansion of the Service which was to be completed in five years. The main features⁵⁵ of the Committee's recommendations were the construction of four Bittern class escort minesweepers, development of depots and training establishments and acquisition of local naval defence equipment. Even though the recommendations were to be implemented over a period of five years, the outbreak of the War in 1939, greatly hastened the process of expansion. The annual subvention⁵⁶ of £100,000 to be paid to the British Government along with miscellaneous other charges ranging between £15,000 and £20,000 was also discontinued on the condition that it would be utilised towards expanding the RIN fleet and maintaining a squadron of six escort vessels which would, besides assisting the Royal Navy, carry out local naval defence duties.

Formation of reserves for the RIN was also resorted to before the War. The Royal Indian Naval Reserve (RINR) comprised serving officers of the Indian Mercantile Marine and had two branches, Executive and Accountant, to which the Engineering branch was also added at the outbreak of the War. The Royal Indian Navy Volunteer Reserve (RINVR) was constituted by inducting qualified members of the general public as commissioned officers

and giving them six months intensive training at Bombay. This was also done for sailors, called ratings at that time. In addition to the regular service ratings, special service ratings were recruited who served for five years before being transferred to the Fleet Reserve for 10 years. These ratings belonged to the cadre of Royal Indian Fleet Reserve (RIFR). Personnel from the merchant marine were also recruited as "Hostilities Only" ratings for service during the War.

The personnel strength of the RIN on October 1, 1939 was 114 officers and 1,732 ratings with only 16 officers manning the Naval Headquarters which was located inside the Naval Dockyard at Bombay.

When World War II broke out, the Royal Navy undertook the task of building, commissioning and working up fast sea-going motorboats for coastal patrol and corvettes and minesweepers which were suitably armed and equipped for carrying out anti-submarine and escort duties in the waters around India. Magnetic mines posed a major threat to the merchant marine at that time and hence 263 merchant and naval ships were fitted with degaussing cables made in India by June 1941. The first Basset class trawler, *HMIS Travancore*, was built at Calcutta and commissioned into the RIN in July 1941 and was followed by five more within a year and another six soon thereafter. The first Bangor class minesweeper built in India joined the RIN in 1943. Six sloops built in Great Britain and named after Indian rivers, Jumna, Sutlej, Cauvery, Kistna, Godavari and Narbada, also joined the RIN to reinforce its fleet.⁵⁷

In order to maintain effective control over the operational and organisational aspects of the RIN at Bombay, the FOCRIN could pay only occasional visits to New Delhi, the focal point of command and control. This led to considerable delay in obtaining New Delhi's clearance on important matters as the bulk of the exchanges between the capital and Bombay had to be by correspondence or by signal. A Naval Liaison Officer was positioned at New Delhi in October 1939 to reduce the time taken in processing important papers but even this proved unsatisfactory and hence the Naval Headquarters was transferred from Bombay to New Delhi in March 1941.

At the time of the outbreak of the War, all training establishments of the RIN were concentrated inside the RIN Dockyard, Bombay. These were the Seamanship School, the Signal School, the Gunnery School, the Mechanical Training Establishment, the Boys' Training Establishment and the Anti-submarine School. There were no schools for training in torpedo, radar and electrical disciplines. There were also no facilities for training officers who were perforce deputed to the Royal Naval Establishments in the United Kingdom for basic and advanced training in all disciplines.

As the size of the RIN fleet increased and the tasks assigned to it multiplied, several new naval establishments came up at Jamnagar, Cochin, Mandapam, Madras, Coconada (Kakinada), Vishakhapatnam and Calcutta. To cope with the increased intake of sailors and requirements of equipping the fleet, the existing naval bases at Karachi and Bombay were expanded and modernised.

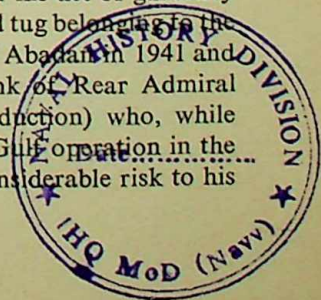
The extremely rapid growth of the RIN in terms of the strength of the fleet and personnel posed grave problems of training personnel in the specialist and general tasks. For example, by June 1940 when Italy jumped into the fray, the RIN had doubled its strength and by 1942 it had expanded to nearly six times its pre-war strength.

The naval establishments⁵⁸ also multiplied fast. To augment training of boys at *HMIS Dalhousie* at Bombay, *HMIS Bahadur* was commissioned at Karachi. In addition, for training officers and ratings, two more establishments, *HMIS Himalaya*, the gunnery training establishment, and *HMIS Chamak*, the radar training establishment, were commissioned at Karachi. The other naval bases that came up about this time were *HMIS Shivaji*, the mechanical training establishment at Lonavla, *HMIS Akbar*, ratings' training establishment at Thane, *HMIS Talwar*, the Signal School at Bombay, and a mechanical training establishment at Pilani. Merchant ships were armed for defence at Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta and inspection organisations were set up at Vishakhapatnam, Madras and Cochin.

In order to make up for the wartime losses of the merchant marine, the need was felt for a major merchant shipbuilding yard and accordingly a site was located at Vishakhapatnam by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company⁵⁹ but the first major ship, a freighter, could only be launched well after the War in 1948. The problem created by the inadequate supply of stores and supplies to the Allied forces owing to the United Kingdom's inability to send supplies in sufficient quantities was solved by the Indian mercantile marine who shouldered the responsibility of delivering stores to places as far as Malta and Hongkong.

Under the overall command of the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, sloops of the Royal Indian Navy took part in the operations⁶⁰ in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf in 1940. *HMIS Jumna* and *HMIS Sutlej* took part in the Battle of the Atlantic in 1941. In the same year, reoccupation of Berbera in the Gulf of Aden was made possible by the first combined operations, i.e. amphibious operations, by the Indian Army and the Royal Indian Navy. The RIN also played a vital role during the advance of the Allied Forces in Sudan. While *HMIS Clive* softened up the area between Port Sudan and Massawa with her armament and *HMIS Hindustan*, *Indus*, *Parvati* and *Ratnagiri* led the attack, the minesweepers entered Massawa and annexed the port from the Italians.

HMIS Lawrence and *Lilavati* earned distinction in the operations in the Persian Gulf and two officers of the RIN were awarded the distinguished Service Cross. These were Lieutenant N. Krishnan for his act of gallantry while boarding and overpowering the crew of an armed tug belonging to the Axis during Operation Countenance for the capture of Abadan in 1941 and Engineer Lieutenant D. Shankar (later rose to the rank of Rear Admiral and became the Controller General of Defence Production) who, while boarding an Italian vessel, *Cabote*, during the Persian Gulf operation in the same year, went through the blazing bridge-deck at considerable risk to his life and captured the crew.



One of the ships built by Australia during the War for the RIN was *HMIS Bengal* (733 tons), a Bathurst Class minesweeper. On November 5, 1942, she sailed from Fremantle as escort to *M.V. Ondina*, a Dutch tanker on passage to Diego Garcia. At 1145 hours on November 11, 1942, she sighted a vessel, about eight miles off, coming straight towards her. The newcomer could not be identified but, in any case, to adopt the safer course, *Bengal* sounded her action alarm, and the ship's company closed up at "Action Stations". *Bengal* altered course to starboard, and instructed the tanker to take station on her starboard beam. At this time, another ship appeared over the horizon, coming up at *Bengal's* port bow. Both ships were larger than *Bengal*, whose armament comprised one 12-pounder gun and a few close-range, anti-aircraft guns. By this time both the ships had been identified as Japanese. The *Ondina* was, therefore, instructed to act independently and to rendezvous at a certain position the following day.

Bengal then increased to full speed, and turned to engage the first raider. She hoped, in this way, to allow the tanker time enough to get away, but the Master of *Ondina* would not leave her to face the two raiders alone. Instead, with his four-inch gunmounted aft, he returned the fire. The action⁶¹ that followed is best described in the words of the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander W.J. Wilson, RINR:

"The raider came up very fast and *Bengal* steamed straight ahead at her. The raider also increased speed, and opened fire at about 3500 yards with her forward guns. We retaliated, and hit first. At 3000 yards we must have hit the raider in the magazine because a great sheet of flame shot up astern, almost mast high. We then closed the range, and fought the action at about 2500 yards. The second Japanese raider never came closer than 8000 yards. Both fired at us continuously. The first ship we engaged carried on firing until, in a great sheet of flame, she blew up and sank. I estimate she fired over 200 rounds at us. At 1246 hours our ammunition was running short. We had very few rounds left, and our vessel was damaged fore and aft. The ship that we sank was a large edition of the Kunikawa Maru class and was of approximately 10,000 tons. The second raider was slightly smaller, her tonnage being 8000. They were both firing 4-inch gun broadsides, and these appeared to be from 5.5 inch guns. We drew the enemy's fire, and acted as a screen, as long as possible, to allow the tanker to escape.

"The encounter lasted for over two hours, but really the first three minutes decided the issue. While shells were bursting all round them, the crew of *Bengal* kept on firing one salvo after another. The sixth salvo made a direct hit on the first raider for, following a terrific explosion, flames leapt high in the air from her. This greatly enthused the RIN crew, we kept on firing steadily. By that time, the second raider had come within range, and opened fire. Within a quarter of an hour of action, a fire broke out in *Bengal's* officers baggage room. She had also been damaged fore and aft, and had only five rounds of high explosives remaining. The Commanding Officer accordingly decided to break off the engagement, and started to make smoke

—but not before the first raider had gone down by the stern and sunk.

“The *Ondina* had then opened the range at about seven miles, but the second raider began to chase her and fire repeatedly. The tanker’s ammunition was soon expended, and her Master, Captain H. Horsman was killed on the bridge. (He was posthumously awarded the Militair Willems Order—Dutch V.C.—by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands.) The *Ondina* was then abandoned, whereupon the raider torpedoed her twice. The raider also machine-gunned the boat, killing the chief engineer and some of the Chinese crew. When the raider left the scene, volunteers boarded the vessel and, with some difficulty, got her under way. She eventually reached Fremantle, where she had been given up for lost.

“It was a matter of surprise, even to the ship’s company, that the *Bengal* emerged from this action without serious damage. They had never been in action before, but when ‘Action Stations’ were sounded, everyone was perfectly calm, firm and disciplined, and all hands were, in fact, anxious to have a shot at the raider. The Captain’s example was highly inspiring, and the tribute he paid to his men was fully deserved. He said, ‘No praise is great enough for their magnificent conduct in face of the greatest danger.’ The FOCRIN Vice-Admiral Sir Herbert Fitzherbert spoke much in the same strain when in his message he said, ‘We are all proud of you.’

“When *Bengal* reached Colombo, every ship in harbour gave her an official and spontaneous reception. A band played on the jetty, and as the ship’s company descended the gangway of their ship, they were greeted with loud cheers. The acme of the crew’s joy however, was when they steamed into Bombay. While still outside the harbour, RIN ships which happened to be in the vicinity, saluted them. The 75 officers and men received a public reception, and were honoured at a lunch in the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall.

“Besides the Commanding Officer of the ship, Lieutenant Commander W.J. Wilson, RINR, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, two Indian ratings were also decorated. Leading Seaman Ismail Mohammed, one of the 12-pounder gun’s crew, was awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty. Petty Officer Mohammed Ibrahim, captain of the 12-pounder gun, was awarded the Indian Order of Merit Second Class for setting an excellent example of steadiness and resolution and using his weapon to the very best advantage even after the *Bengal* had been hit by enemy gun fire.”

The writer well remembers decyphering the signals from *Bengal* in the Navy Office in Calcutta that night and passing the news to the then Naval Officer-in-Charge, Calcutta, Captain L. Sanderson, C.I.E., RIN.

Operating from Chittagong and Koronge Island, ships of the RIN carried out sustained attacks on the Arakan Coast of Burma. They also provided close support to troops that had been landed by the RIN landing craft for driving the Japanese away from the area. Despite its success in operations in various theatres of war around the globe, the losses suffered by the RIN were

negligible and when VJ Day arrived, ships of the RIN and their men were still raring to go.

Six ships of the RIN were lost during the War: *HMIS Pathan* (Escort Patrol Ship) 23rd June, 1940 off Bombay by explosion; *HMIS Parvati* (Auxiliary) 30th April, 1941 mined off Massawa; *HMIS Parbhavati* (Auxiliary) 8th December, 1941 off Goa; *HMIS Sophie Marie* (Auxiliary) 1st March, 1942 mined in Macpherson Strait; *HMIS Indus* (Sloop) 6th April, 1942 air attack at Akyab; and *HMIS Lady Craddock* (Auxiliary) 16th October, 1942 Cyclone in river Hooghly.

The end to World War II was hastened by the nuclear holocaust⁶² perpetrated on the innocent residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan and on August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito surrendered. At the time of cessation of hostilities, the RIN fleet comprised seven sloops, four frigates, four corvettes, 14 minesweepers, 16 trawlers, two depot ships, 30 auxiliary vessels, 150 landing craft of various types, 200 harbour craft, several motor launches and harbour defence motor launches and over 25,000 officers and men.

As the guns fell silent on August 15, 1945, exactly two years before we were to gain Independence, the stage was set for carrying out the post-war tasks, such as sanitising—sweeping large areas for mines and other sunken hazards in and around Indian waters; preventing any further repetition of the traumatic experience; decommissioning or assigning peace-time roles to a large number of ships and craft with the RIN which had been rendered redundant and refurbishing the Navy to meet the post-World War II requirements.

The 1939-45 global conflict also brought in the growing realisation of the after-effects of man's merciless and persistent assault on ecology which began with the Industrial Revolution and which has assumed monstrous proportions today, the rapidly dwindling energy, food and mineral resources of the earth and the vast potential of the living and mineral wealth in the oceans, on the ocean bed and below the ocean bed. International rivalry over sharing the marine resources considerably delayed the adoption and coming into force of the Law of Sea Convention. This is likely to inexorably shift the theatres of future tensions from land to sea. The clouds of portent are already discernible over the distant horizon and how far man will succeed in striking a happy balance between his increasing needs and available resources without affecting ecology, only the future can tell.

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2. Plans for the Development of the Navy

Plans for the RIN made during the 'forties'

Towards the end of World War II, it was decided to appoint a Committee for planning the requirements of India's Armed Forces after the cessation of hostilities. The Committee's primary role¹ was to assess the size and composition of the Post-War Armed Forces in India, which included the future Royal Indian Navy and the tasks it was going to share with the Army and the Air Force. This Committee's proceedings were to be based on the 'Report on the Size and Composition of the Post-War Forces in India' prepared by the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

This report makes significant reading; it was, of course, based on the assumption that by the end of the War, Japan would have been completely subdued, the principal foreign powers in the East would be the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and China and that India would be responsible for maintaining sufficient forces to overcome a minor power and to hold out against a major power until Imperial Forces could arrive. It didn't take into account an independent India after the War.

In the course of discussing the parameters on which the framework for the report would be based, the report states, "The British Commonwealth of Nations comprises many countries and communities linked together by the sea and air. No one part of the Commonwealth can, in peace or war, be self-sufficient or independent of supplies from other parts. The economy and defence of each nation and community of the Commonwealth must, therefore, largely depend on the use of the sea and air routes and ports. While the main responsibility for keeping open these sea and air communications must rest with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force under the orders of the British Government, each component part of the Commonwealth should be prepared to bear its share. India, in common with other countries of the Empire, should, therefore, maintain such naval and air forces as are necessary to ensure the defence of her bases and the security of shipping within her coastal waters from submarine, mining and air attack and to assist in the protection of trade in the ocean shipping routes.

"India's central position in the Indian Ocean is likely to make her particularly sensitive to the need for an increased naval force and especially for

larger warships than she at present possesses. Such ships, unlike the present small units of the Royal Indian Navy, would be capable of adequately representing India in other parts of the Commonwealth and might do much to foster better understanding of India and thus improve relations within the Empire."¹

The Committee described the principal task of the Navy thus: "The principal responsibility of India's Navy after the war will be the safety of Indian and Empire shipping in the ports of India and their approaches; India will also wish to take her share in the protection of this shipping on the trade routes within the Indian Ocean. It will be an important task of India's Navy to provide facilities for the combined operational training of the Army formations maintained in the country and to provide a share of the escorts, assault shipping and craft required to land these formations on a hostile shore, should this prove necessary. This implies the maintenance in peace of a nucleus force of assault shipping and craft and the appropriate training organisations, as well as personnel possessing an expert knowledge of this subject. In addition, the Navy, in conjunction with the Air Force, must be prepared to take its share in intercepting and attacking any foreign invading force which may attempt a landing on the shores of India."

The report considered the Army responsible for coastal defence and the Air Force for "seaward reconnaissance, shipping protection and co-operation with the RIN."¹ It was also considered essential that "naval units may be required to proceed at short notice to ports in occupied countries should disturbances arise and to patrol the river approaches to such ports." Concern was expressed for superpower aggression on Afghanistan, "We must also ensure sufficient aircraft being available to prevent the Afghans from being overawed by the Russian air strength on their border"—an appreciation which is of interest even today!

On the state of peacetime preparedness and inter-Service cooperation: "It is necessary to bear in mind that naval forces, to counter these threats, cannot be quickly improvised in times of war. The main task of the Navy in peace, in common with the other Services, is to prepare for war but since the full strength of the naval force may be needed immediately on the outbreak of war and a long period is required both for the construction of warships and the training of naval personnel, it follows that the naval forces and air forces to co-operate with them must be maintained in peace at a high standard of preparedness.

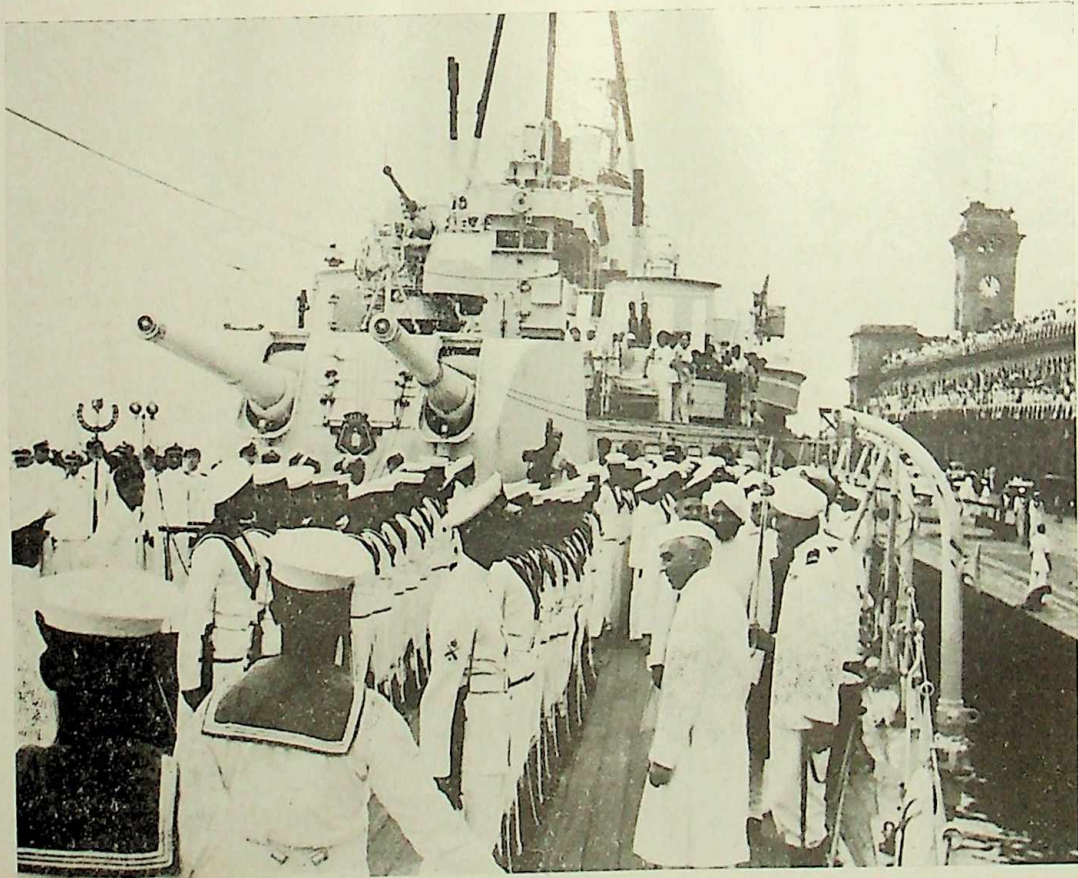
"While for purposes of local defence a number of small ships must be maintained, we consider that a proportion of large ships will also be necessary. The provision of such ships will produce a balanced naval force, form an added incentive to recruitment and increased pride in the Service, besides assisting considerably in the training of the personnel which cannot be adequately carried out in small ships. In addition, we attach great importance to the formation of an adequate air component for seaward reconnaissance and a striking force and also to the maintenance of modern coast defences and



Secretary of the Admiralty, Commander-in-Chief of the Nore, the Indian High Commissioner, Second Sea Lord, Commander-in-Chief RIN, and Commanding Officer on board *HMIS Delhi*.



Rear Admiral Lord Mountbatten of Burma inspecting ship's company, *HMIS Delhi*.



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inspecting a guard of honour on the quarterdeck of *HMIS Delhi*, formerly *HMIS Achilles*, on her arrival at Ballard Pier, Bombay on September 16, 1948. On his right are Sardar Baldev Singh, the Defence Minister and Lieutenant Kirpal Singh (who later rose to the rank of Rear Admiral), the guard officer.



Finding their sea legs on the quarterdeck of *INS Delhi* during her cruise to Indonesia in June 1950 are Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Shrimati Indira Gandhi and her sons, Rajiv and Sanjay.

material for local seaward defences such as booms, mines, nets and indicator loops.”¹

As regards possible aggression from major powers, the report states: “Apart from a possible long term threat from China, Russia is the only major power from whom a serious threat might be likely. So long as India is connected with Great Britain, either as a Dominion or by a treaty guaranteeing assistance, hostilities between Russia and India could only be either the cause of or the result of a war between Great Britain and the USSR. Such a war would, inevitably, sooner or later, develop into another world conflict. While India’s contribution to a war of this nature will depend very largely on the defence policy of the British Empire as a whole, she is likely to bear the first brunt of such an attack and must, therefore, be prepared at all times to defend her frontiers until Imperial reinforcements arrive.”

The appreciation of possible threat is evident: “Russia is the only major power which appears likely to be in a position seriously to threaten India for some years after the present war. For this reason, aggression by Russia has been taken as the basis for estimating the forces which India would require for her defence against a major power. It is not possible to forecast with any degree of accuracy the strength of the forces which Russia, by the time she is likely to become an enemy, may be able to bring to bear against India. The scale of attack would depend on the conditions which obtain at present or those which appear likely if normal preparations were made, and on the assumption that Russia will evacuate North Persia at the end of the War. As these conditions change, so must the scale of enemy attack be reviewed and our defensive measures brought up-to-date; at the same time, it will be necessary to consider the possibility of a threat by any other major power.”¹

On July 13, 1946, a despatch from Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy to Lord Pathick Lawrence, the then Secretary of State for India, *inter alia* said, “. . . the greatest danger is that an independent India may come under the domination of Russia. It is very difficult to estimate how likely this is to happen. An independent Indian Government could hardly be unconscious of the length of its seaboard or of the fact that 90 per cent of its trade is sea-borne. The defences of the country are so much stronger by land than by sea that India would naturally look first for a naval alliance, especially at a time when a steady flow of imports is so vital to the development of the country. And it must surely be many years before Russia can become a formidable naval power in the Indian Ocean. Again communications by land with Russia are so bad that Russian help would be no substitute for British or American help in developing the country. It seems, therefore, that the future Government of India will not of its own choice go for Russian protection.

“Russia might however try to employ her usual tactics of giving support to a revolutionary party. Conditions in India are not unfavourable. A few capitalists and princes have enormous fortunes, while labour is still exploited, has genuine grievances, and has begun to feel its power. Maladministration

can easily cause local scarcity and famine. The nucleus of a Communist organisation already exists and is making itself felt. It would not be difficult for Russia to gain a foothold in the country by its usual methods if the Government is weak and if the gateway of Afghanistan is not effectively barred.”²

The Navy's case was effectively put in the following words: “The establishment of industries within India will tend to make her economy and prosperity more dependent on the security of her export trade and so maintain, and possibly increase, the importance of her ports and overseas communications. It follows, therefore, that India must maintain adequate naval forces and that the ports on which she is dependent must be kept up-to-date in accordance with modern requirements. The coastal trade of India is not only an essential part of her peace and war economy but is also an important factor in her transportation system. The requisitioning of the majority of her coastal steamers at the beginning of the present war for naval purposes has greatly increased the congestion on the railway which might have been impossible had India been threatened from the outset. It is, therefore, important that encouragement should be given to the development of the coastal trade and the shipbuilding industry, that sufficient naval forces should be maintained to avoid being obliged to requisition mercantile shipping immediately on the outbreak of war.”¹

Even the naval air element was thought of as is evident: “Provision must be made for naval defence both as regards the development of the Royal Indian Navy and the formation of an air component to work in co-operation with it.”¹

It is obvious, therefore, that the British strategy for an allied or commonwealth future did consider independent India as a vital link between the East and the West. To sustain their interests in the Indian Ocean Area, Indian maritime strength was given an important place.

“Discussion on the future Royal Indian Navy” in the report was based on the premise that the Naval forces after the war would be limited to those needed only for local naval defence and to assist in the protection of trade in the Indian Ocean. It also included maintenance of sufficient assault craft for training the Indian Army in amphibious warfare during peace. It was based on the assumption that the Royal Indian Navy was already capable of limited coastal defence and had adequate seagoing strength. It, therefore, required provision and development of a balanced naval force which could be further developed in case of a future war. The Committee, therefore, recommended the generation of a complete force consisting of one squadron of three cruisers, a destroyer leader with a flotilla of eight destroyers, one eight-ship training flotilla of sloops, one eight-ship flotilla of frigates for miscellaneous duties, eight Bangor/Bathurst class minesweepers and eight motor minesweepers. As regards smaller, amphibious and auxiliary craft, a total strength of eight motor torpedo boats (MTB), eight motor launches (ML), eight harbour defence motor launches (HDML), two marine survey

vessels with auxiliaries and trawlers, a 'nucleus' of assault ships and craft and one repair ship was recommended.

These recommendations made in 1944 envisaged a two-stage development of the Royal Indian Navy. Stage I had a time frame of two years from 1945 to 1947 for replacing "existing inefficient ships" by frigates and modern sloops, acquisition of eight destroyers and training of personnel for cruisers.

The time-frame for Stage II was a four-year period after the war with Japan ended during which the rest of the recommended force levels had to be provided. It was perceived that the Royal Indian Navy would require about 1,500 regular officers and 15,000 ratings who would gradually be trained to man the RIN ships to replace the Royal Naval personnel then serving in the RIN. It was also stated that "His Majesty's Government" would lend these ships to India, which would subsequently be maintained and repaired in England at the cost of the Indian exchequer. Further, it recommended that "His Majesty's Indian Dockyard" at Bombay continue and there should be base establishments and repair facilities on both the west and the east coasts.

On April 12, 1944, Vice Admiral Godfrey, the Flag Officer Commanding the Royal Indian Navy, submitted a detailed paper¹ to the Reorganisation Committee on the 'Future of the Royal Indian Navy'³ much on similar lines and also keeping in view what the Royal Navy could possibly provide or spare. His plan also was divided into two stages, each comprising several phases. His recommendations elaborated on larger ships than those that existed with the RIN at that time and included aircraft carriers and submarines in the final stages of development. His plan also emphasised the organisation of the RIN to generate an in-house capability for maintenance and training (such as adequate requirement of bases, dockyards, depots, training and additional shore establishments).

In the preparation of various reports and papers prior to and after the War, evidently the Royal Indian Navy was envisaged to develop into a full-fledged Dominion Naval Force towards the late 'forties' and be deployed as a vanguard of Commonwealth interests. It appears that even after Independence our planners continued to remain influenced by what was said earlier. That the Indian Navy did not quite develop on these lines could possibly be attributed to the "land-frontier-threat only" concept that continued to occupy Indian minds at the highest levels for decades that followed. This resulted in the inadequate funds made available for developing the maritime force in the years that followed.

The guns finally fell silent on August 15, 1945 and the time had come to assess the requirement of future weapons and platforms in the light of the post-War environment. Before, however, this could be done, the RIN had to undertake large-scale demobilisation of personnel (no longer required for war) as well as decommissioning of many old ships and craft which had mushroomed during the war. The Service had also to handle a mutiny in February 1946 and to transfer a sizeable part of its assets to Pakistan in August 1947.

In as early as October 1944, the then Viceroy of India, Viscount Wavell, in a secret telegram to the then Secretary of State for India Mr. Amery, suggested a number of measures which would help "to change the atmosphere in India" at that time. One of the major suggestions was a declaration by the British Prime Minister himself that it is the definite intention of the British Government to give India self-government as early as possible and it was suggested that the declaration should also say that "the greater measure of cooperation that political parties in India give, the earlier the change-over is likely to be." A significant suggestion in the same telegram mentioned that in the same declaration a "promise of modern ships for the Indian Navy at the end of the war" should also be made.

At a meeting of India and Burma Committee held on May 28, 1947, the then Viceroy Viscount Mountbatten is recorded to have said, "The Interim Government was very anxious to obtain a British cruiser for service with the Indian Navy. It was, in his view, essential to the efficiency of the Indian Navy that this request should be met; this would have the further advantage that the Indian Navy would for years be dependent on the British Navy for active help in maintaining in service a naval unit of this size. He thought that it might be possible for a British cruiser to be loaned to the Indian Navy under arrangements similar to those recently made with the Norwegian Government."¹

In the first Plans Paper brought out after Independence on August 25, 1947, the role and the force requirements of the Navy of free India for the next ten years were given a concrete shape for the first time. To quote from Chapter V of the Plans Paper, "The eventual role of the Navy of India is to safeguard her shipping on the high seas from interference in war; to ensure that supplies can both reach and leave India by sea in all circumstances; to keep open her ports and coastal shipping routes; to prevent any enemy landing on her shores; and to support the Army in any operations which may be required in the furtherance of the national policy."⁴

It was stated, "So long as India remains within the British Commonwealth of Nations, her task will be very much lightened by the assistance she will receive from the Royal and other Dominion Navies. But even in these circumstances, she will be expected, and indeed she will wish to, contribute to the general Naval Defence of the Commonwealth in accordance with her status as the principal sovereign state in the Indian Ocean."

(The Plans Paper preceived the building in the shortest possible time a completely Indian-manned balanced task force⁵ consisting of two light fleet carriers, three cruisers, eight destroyers, four submarines and "such smaller ships as were necessary for training and auxiliary purposes." The plan emphasised on the induction of air and submarine elements in the Indian Navy with an aim "to build up such a force" within a definite period of the suggested 10 years.) The Plans Paper was prepared by the Royal Indian Navy's Chief of Staff, Commodore M.H.St. L. Nott, a regular RIN officer at Naval Headquarters. His service continued to be loaned to India for developing

the Navy even after Independence. He unfortunately died in an air crash in Italy in March 1948. Those who worked with him speak highly of his knowledge and foresight.

Acquisition of ships

Based on the recommendations of the first Plans Paper, negotiations were initiated with the British Government for acquiring the first cruiser¹ for India, *HMS Achilles* (of the famed Battle of the River Plate of World War II), which was to be commissioned on handing over as *HMIS Delhi*. Arguments favouring the acquisition of three such cruisers (Leander class) were put up as Plans Paper 2/47 which deliberated on the build-up of the RIN as a balanced naval force, getting out of the sloop stage and for contributing towards India's image in the region. Based on these considerations, Naval Headquarters recommended to the Government that the acquisition of the first cruiser be given overriding priority.

HMIS DELHI

This cruiser, costing £ 736,500,⁶ which was inclusive of the cost of normal outfits of armament and naval stores and any modifications required to be made for habitability in tropical conditions, was to be manned by 24 Indian Commissioned Officers, four British Commissioned Officers, two Indian Warrant Officers and 16 British Warrant Officers besides 756 ratings of various specialisations and branches. Twelve officers were to be deputed to the U.K. for training and specialisation in Navigation and Direction and attachment to various ships and establishments. Several ratings were also to be sent to the U.K. for training and specialisation in various disciplines including Part II Qualifications' in gunnery, radar, torpedo and anti-submarine warfare, communications, engineering and electrical technology and store-keeping.

The first Commanding Officer¹ of the cruiser was Captain H.N.S. Brown of the Royal Navy with Commander R.D. Katari as his Executive Officer. (Commander Katari rose to the rank of Admiral and took over as India's first Indian Chief of the Naval Staff.) About this time, it was decided not to acquire the other two cruisers, the *Ajax* and the *Leander*.

The plans took more concrete shape when Plans Paper 10/1948, wherein the details of the composition of the Navy of the 'fifties', as envisaged at that time, were given.⁷ As it was appreciated that it may be impractical to accord Government approval to the complete development programme at that stage, it was proposed that sanction be initially accorded for the first six years of the development programme only. The ships and aircraft to be acquired during the period 1949-54 were, one light fleet carrier, three cruisers, seven destroyers, six submarines, one survey vessel, one landing ship tank and some other supporting craft.

While negotiations were going on for the finalisation of plans for the other ships, action had already been initiated to finalise the manning, equipment and training plans for *HMIS Delhi*. The main bulk of the crew for the

cruiser had to be carried on board naval ships to the U.K. well in time for working up the various departments of the cruiser before its commissioning. *HMIS Kistna* and *HMIS Cauvery* were assigned this task. The officers, ratings and essential stores and equipment were embarked⁶ on these two ships which were prepared for a cruise to the U.K. Calling at Aden, Port Said, Malta and Gibraltar, these ships headed towards their respective destinations—*Cauvery* to Plymouth and *Kistna* to Portsmouth.

During passage, Commander Katari,⁶ the Commanding Officer of *Kistna*, received orders appointing him the Commander (officially designated 'Executive Officer', i.e., the second-in-command) of the *Delhi*. On arrival in the U.K., Commander Katari underwent a few pre-commissioning courses at Davenport and Portsmouth. He then joined the *Delhi* which was undergoing refit at the time at Chatham. His first lieutenant was Lieutenant Commander S.M. Nanda, his navigator Lieutenant K.L. Kulkarni, and his gunnery officers Lieutenant Commander V.A. Kamath and Lieutenant Kirpal Singh. All these officers⁵ later rose to flag rank.

July 5, 1948 was a red-letter day for India when the Indian Navy's first cruiser *HMIS Delhi*⁶ was handed over by the Commander-in-Chief of Nore to Shri V.K. Krishna Menon, the then Indian High Commissioner in the U.K. Notable among the guests present on the occasion were Admiral Sir Harold Burrough, under whose guidance the ship had been refitted, and Vice Admiral W.E. Parry, Commander-in-Chief designate of the Royal Indian Navy. The 'work-up' programme for the Indian crew began immediately. A few days before *HMIS Delhi* sailed for India, Lord Mountbatten who had by then relinquished his appointment of India's Governor-General and returned home, visited the ship. He was highly impressed by the way the ship was being handled by its fresh complement of officers and ratings. The ship sailed from Sheerness on July 6, 1948 and, on her way to India, called at Portsmouth⁸ Portland, Gibraltar and Malta for a few weeks for a further spell of 'work-up' which was facilitated by the presence of the Mediterranean Fleet at Gibraltar. At Malta, the ship was visited by Admiral Sir Arthur Power, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet.

The *Delhi* had a standard displacement of 7030 tons while the full load displacement was 9740 tons. Her length was 554.5 feet, and her beam, a little over 55 feet, her draught, 16 feet forward and 20 feet aft. She was powered by Parsons' geared turbines delivering a specified horse-power of 72,000 on four shafts. Her maximum speed was 32 knots. Her armament package comprised six six-inch guns for surface operations and eight four-inch guns, fifteen 40 mm guns and four three-pounders for anti-aircraft defence. The ship had eight 21-inch torpedo tubes. The oil fuel capacity was 1800 tons while the bunked accommodation was for a complement of 680.

The *Delhi*'s crest was a caparisoned elephant carrying a ceremonial umbrella with the logo "Sarvato Jayamichchhami" (may you be a victor every-

where) and the ship was to be the first in the series of cruisers that were to be acquired for the Navy and named after major Indian cities. As *Achilles*, her pentagonal crest portrayed the head of a knight-in-armour.

On the ship's arrival in India⁶ on September 16, 1948, the officers and ratings were accorded a tumultuous welcome. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, and many other civilian dignitaries visited the ship immediately on her coming along side. The Prime Minister addressed the officers and ratings and expressed his pride in the floating fortress and the men on board who would, if the occasion arose, effectively defend the country's shores with all their might.

Lieutenant Commander V.A. Kamath (later to become a Vice Admiral), INS Delhi's first gunnery officer, reminisces "My direct association with *Delhi* perhaps goes back longer than any other officer past or present in our Service, as I was sent to the Whale Island Gunnery School at Portsmouth in as early as March 1947 to train Indian ratings in the Gunnery System of the cruiser. At that time, it was still the pre-partition Navy and the idea was that we would eventually commission all three Leander class cruisers then remaining with the RN, of which *HMS Achilles* (later *Delhi*) was to be the first. While at Portsmouth I had frequently to visit *Achilles*, then refitting in Chatham, to progress the gunnery aspects of the refit, as the RN complement on board did not have a specialist 'G' Officer."⁵

"Partition came in August 1947, and the only Gunner I had with me at Whale Island, Sharif Khan, and all the Muslim ratings who opted for Pakistan, were returned to Karachi. Unfortunately, those who opted for Pakistan formed the bulk of the gunnery ratings and we had to wait a few more months before fresh batches of ratings who had opted for India were sent to England to start all over again the training that had been going extremely well until August 1947. This obviously put back the commissioning date of the ship, which eventually took place at Chatham on July 5, 1948.

"At the reception held on board alongside Ballard Pier on the ship's arrival at Bombay, I remember we were honoured by the presence of our then Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru. He was, unfortunately, completely lost in this large drinking gathering of uniformed officers and men and the smart set of Bombay. He spent most of the time standing morose by himself in a corner of the quarterdeck hardly talking to anyone. It was then that Lieutenant Percy Simmons, who was the Senior Watchkeeper on board, who, I vaguely remember, tried to make conversation with Pandit Nehru. It appears that when he was told by the P.M. that he was planning a visit to Indonesia on board *Delhi*, Percy Simmons took upon himself to give the Prime Minister some sound financial advice on how best to go about the exchange of Indian Rupees into Indonesian Rupiahs. This incident may well explain why Pandit Nehru left the ship in a huff earlier than expected."

Magar joins the fleet

About this time, there were four Landing Ships Tanks (LSTs), Class 3—*HMS Smiter*, *Thrasher*, *Bruiser* and *Avenger*, in various Indian ports. These

ships had been borrowed from the British Government by the Quartermaster General of the Indian Army on behalf of the Government of India for dumping surplus ammunition into the sea. Due to lack of trained personnel, however, only one ship had been in continuous use and this was manned by the Royal Indian Navy.

Each landing ship had a cruising speed of 12 knots and bunked accommodation for 18 officers and 150 men in addition to the normal ship's company. It could also carry 2,000 tons of stores or, alternatively, a varied combination of lorries, landing craft and tanks. These ships were essentially ocean-going tank-landing ships capable of landing tanks, vehicles and men directly on beaches during amphibious operations or for disaster rescue purposes.

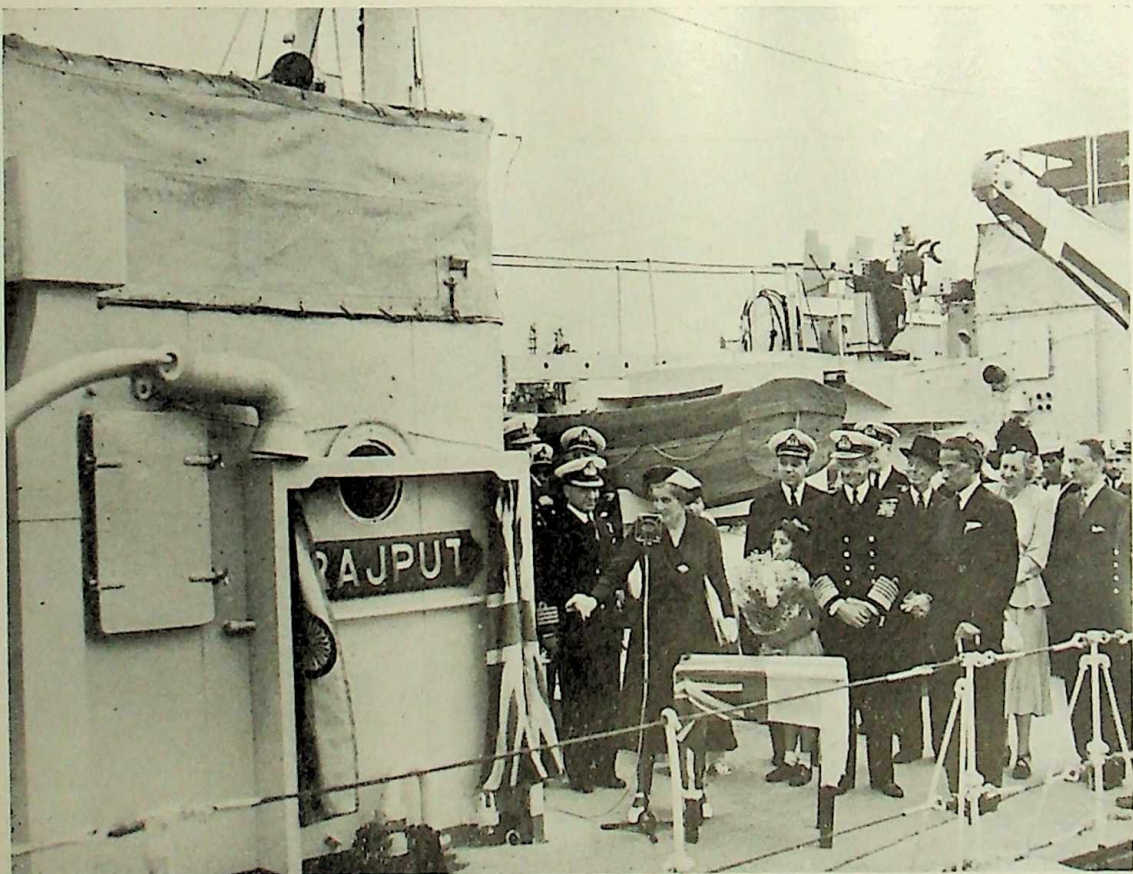
Communication links between Bombay and Cochin were very poor and a train journey took more than three days. Cochin was at that time being developed as the Navy's premier training establishment while the Naval Dockyard was located in Bombay and thus there was an immediate need to transport large quantities of stores and equipment from Bombay to Cochin. The LSTs were considered best-suited for this purpose. These ships could also be used to transport steel from Calcutta and cement from Bombay to Vishakhapatnam and Cochin for construction purposes.

However, the plans had to be revised owing to many reasons and it was later decided to acquire only one LST and thus *HMS Avenger*⁵ was acquired for the RIN from the British Government. The ship was renamed *HMIS Magar* and was commissioned into the RIN on April 11, 1949.

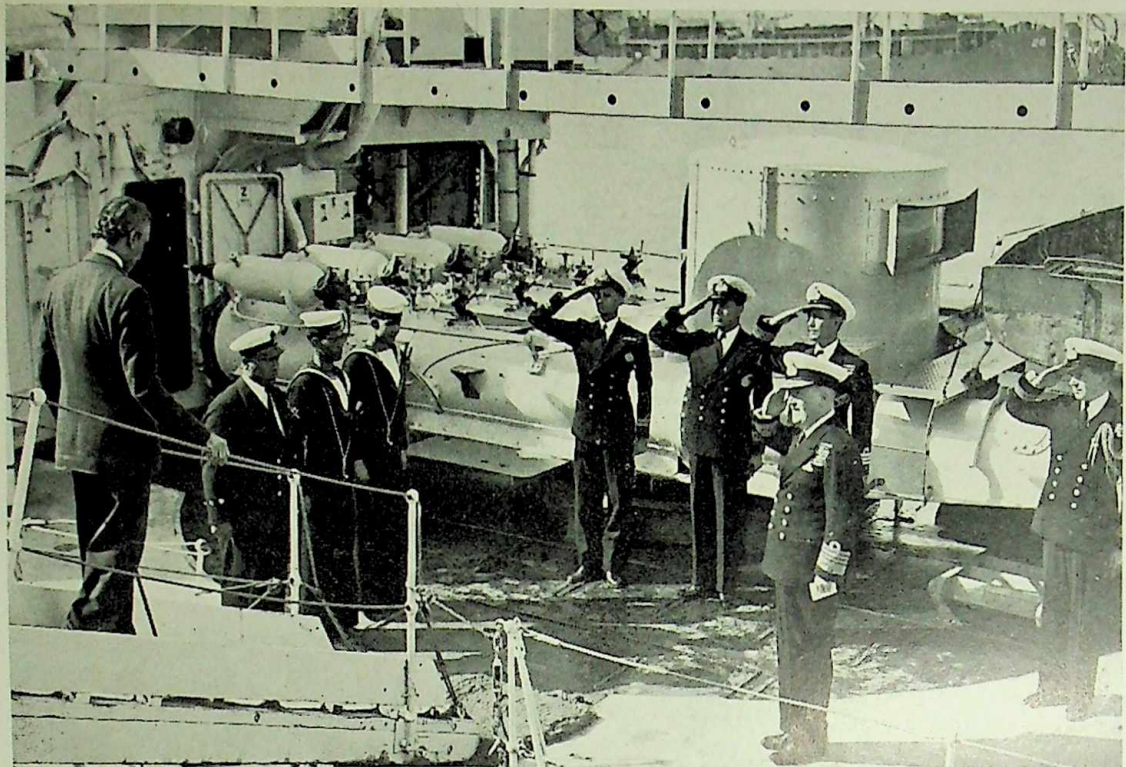
Three destroyers join the RIN

Naval Plans Paper 1/47 had envisaged, besides building up a cruiser squadron of three ships, the development of a destroyer flotilla of eight ships concurrently with the acquisition of a Fleet Air Arm and a submarine flotilla. In Plans Paper 5/48, however, the number of destroyers required was reduced to five, out of which three were to be acquired by the end of 1948 and two early in 1950-51. Plans Paper 7/48 dated June 4, 1948 stated that as a result of negotiations with the British Government, the Admiralty had agreed to transfer three destroyers,⁵ *HMS Rotherham*, *Redoubt*, and *Raider* to the Government of India. It was anticipated at that time that these ships, which were undergoing refit at various Royal Naval Dockyards, would be ready for handing over to the Royal Indian Navy by January 1949.

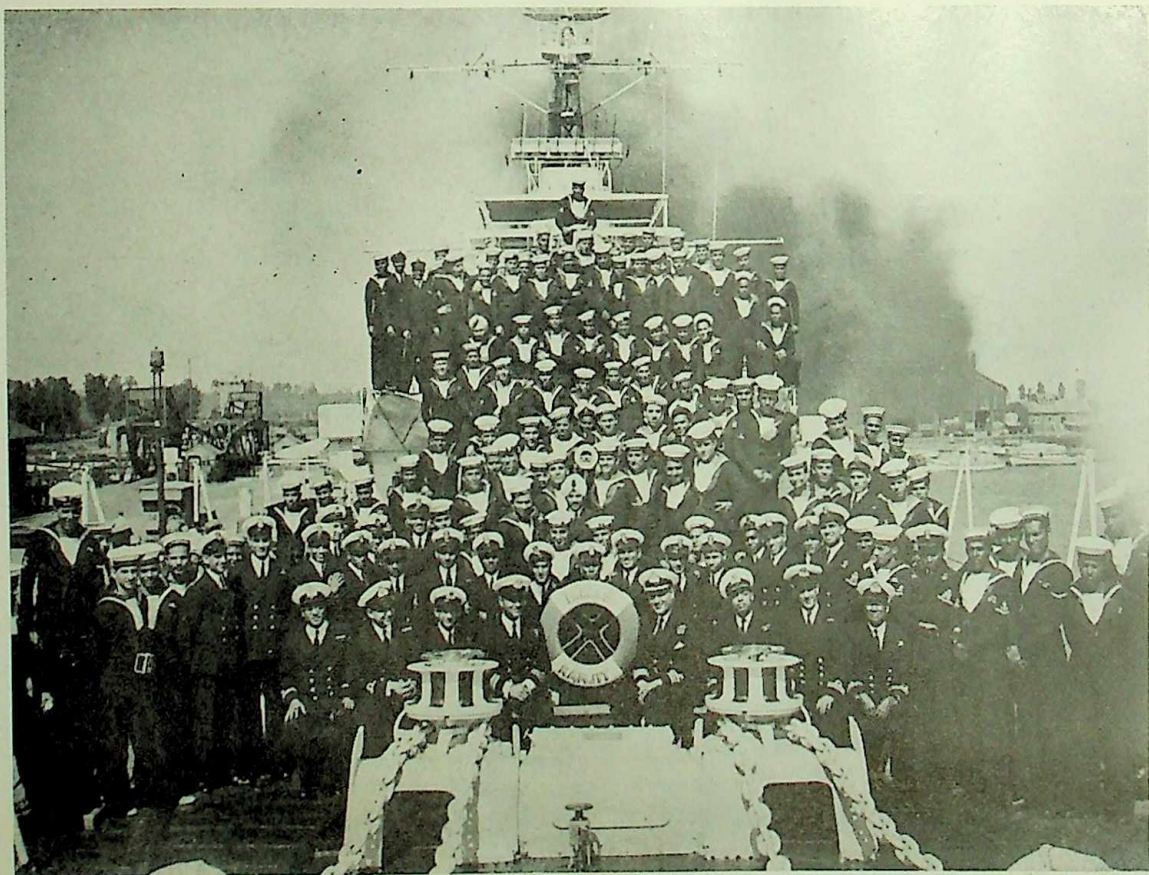
At that time there was an acute shortage of ratings with Part II qualifications, i.e. professional specialist qualifications in different disciplines. It was, therefore, considered necessary to firstly, train these ratings in their respective qualifications before appointing them to the destroyers, and secondly, depute a certain number of key officers and ratings for training in sea-going destroyers of the Royal Navy before they became proficient to carry out their specialist tasks on board these destroyers. It was also hoped to complete the training schedule of these officers and ratings well in time for their being



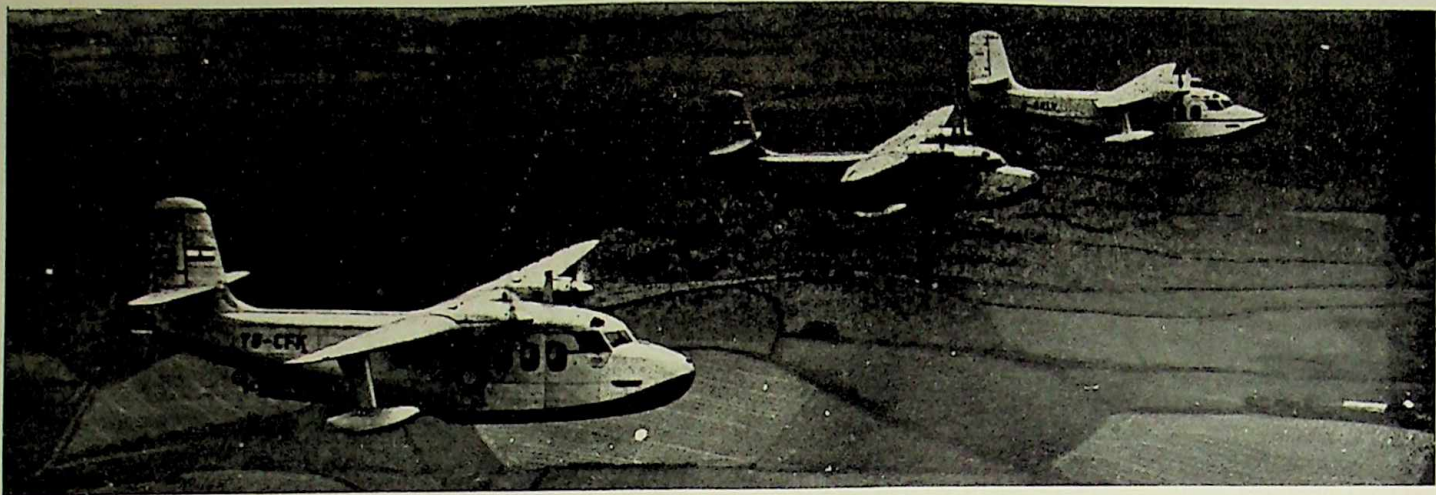
Lady Willis, wife of Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, Unveiling ship's name.



Indian High Commissioner V.K. Krishna Menon being piped aboard *HMIS Rana*.



The Commanding Officer, Officers and Ship's Company of *HMIS Ranjit*.



A squadron of amphibious Sealand aircraft of the Navy's Fleet Air Arm on a reconnaissance mission. These were among the first lot of aircraft acquired for the Navy for which the negotiations were held in 1949-50.

available for commissioning¹ the destroyers in March 1949. All three destroyers were planned to be commissioned together as they would then be able to 'work-up' as a team and it was considered that two months' working up with Royal Navy's Home or Mediterranean Fleet, would be sufficient before the ships sailed for India. The ships were expected to arrive in India by June 1949.

In case an adequate number of billets could not be made available on board the Royal Navy's destroyers, it was alternatively planned to depute officers and key ratings only for the first destroyer for sea training with the Royal Navy, besides a few engine-room personnel for the second and third destroyers; the bulk of officers and ratings were to be trained on the first destroyer after it was manned by RIN personnel. To give these officers and ratings sufficient sea training to commission a new type of ship on which the majority had no experience, it was considered necessary to commission the ships at intervals of two months so that the three destroyers would be commissioned in a period of four months and be ready after a further period of two months to allow for the working up of the third destroyer. All destroyers were to be ready to sail for India in company. The complement of three ships varied as the *Rotherham*, being the senior ship of the squadron, was to be commanded by a Captain and he would carry his staff in addition to the normal complement of the ship. The *Raider* and the *Redoubt* were to be commanded by a Commander and a Lieutenant Commander respectively so that a definite order of seniority within the squadron could be maintained. Including the specialists in gunnery, torpedo, anti-submarine, communications and navigation and direction, the officer complement of the three ships was to be 17, 14 and 13 while the complement of ratings, 229, 208 and 205 respectively.

The total non-recurring¹ expenditure involved in the acquisition of these destroyers was Rs. 1.548 crores and the annual recurring expenditure was estimated at Rs. 75.39 lakhs. This expenditure was to be met by debiting it to the unreleased portion of the sterling balance. These destroyers were expected to have a life-span of 15 to 18 years when they were to be replaced for which it was also proposed to make an annual contribution of Rs. 10 lakhs for each destroyer, besides building up a reserve stock of ammunition to be kept ashore. The non-recurring annual expenditure of Rs. 25.13 lakhs per destroyer included Rs. 1.74 lakhs for pay and allowances of officers, Rs. 3.39 lakhs for pay and allowances of ratings, Rs. 10 lakhs for stores and the sinking fund of Rs. 10 lakhs towards replacement after 20 years.

The formal request for the transfer of the three destroyers⁸ was made when Shri H.M. Patel, the then Defence Secretary, addressed a letter to Mr. John Lang, Secretary to the Admiralty, on November 15, 1947. This was followed by a formal letter addressed to the Secretary, Military Department (Defence Staff), Commonwealth Relations Office, London, which also sought facilities for the training of the ship's crews, prior to their commissioning in the Royal Naval destroyers and training establishments.

The formal sanction for the acquisition of the three 'R' Class destroyers was obtained in July 1949. It was also decided that the ships, *HMS Rotherham*, *Redoubt* and *Raider* were to be respectively renamed *Rajput* (Flotilla Leader), *Rana* and *Ranjit*. The actual cost of the three destroyers, paid on March 25, 1949, was £ 700,800 while the cost of reconditioning these ships worked out to £ 344,200. *HMIS Rajput*, with Captain A. Chakraverti (became a Rear Admiral before retiring) as its Commanding Officer and Senior Officer of the 11th Destroyer Squadron, the Indian Navy's first destroyer squadron was commissioned with pomp and eclat at Portsmouth on July 28, 1949. *HMIS Ranjit* with Commander G.S. Kapoor as its Commanding Officer had already been commissioned at Chatham on July 4. The third destroyer, *HMIS Rana*, whose Commanding Officer was Commander S.N. Kohli (later an Admiral and Chief of the Naval Staff) was commissioned at Devonport on September 9, 1949.

The standard displacement of *HMIS Rajput* was 1,750 tons while that of the other two ships was 1,705 tons; the full load displacement of *Rajput* was 2,510 tons with the other ships' full load displacing 2,425 tons. The overall length of this class of ships was 358.25 feet with a beam of 35 feet eight inches, the maximum displacement being 16 feet. The armament consisted of four 4.7-inch guns which could be used against surface and serial targets and four two-pounder pompoms. Besides, *Rajput* had six 20 mm anti-aircraft guns while the other two ships had four 40 mm anti-aircraft guns each. Each ship was fitted with eight 21-inch torpedo tubes on quadruple mountings and four depth-charge throwers. The propulsion machinery of each ship comprised Parson's geared turbines delivering a specified horsepower of 40,000 on two shafts giving it a maximum speed of 32 knots.

The crests were shaped after traditional shields and depicted different types of mediaeval Rajput weapons; the *Rajput* crest displayed a Rajput helmet and two crossed spears, *Rana*'s crest had a broad-based knife with a petagonal blade and a cross-grip, and *Ranjit*'s crest carried two crossed curved daggers enclosed in a ring.

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3. The Andamans, Nicobars and Laccadives—The Sentinels of Our Waters

MANY INDIANS still refer to Cape Comorin as the Southernmost tip of India. In fact the Southernmost tip is the Pygmalion Point which in turn is the Southern tip of the Great Nicobar Island. It is obvious that we have yet to accord due importance to our sentinels at sea—our islands in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

✓ The British were fully conscious of the military importance of these islands and records reveal the British Admiralty's plans to install certain defences at Nancowry for naval use.

The utility of these Islands for the Japanese and their viewpoint has been highlighted by Woodburn Kirby in his *History of the Second World War*. "As early as the 7th February (1942) the Imperial General Headquarters (Japan) had issued orders for their capture" he writes.

The entire strength¹ of the army stationed at Port Blair during the earlier years of World War II consisted of a British company which was replaced by a battalion of Gurkhas on January 1, 1942. When the fall of Rangoon seemed imminent these battalions were withdrawn on March 12, 1942 under General Wavell's orders. The islands were thus left to their own fate. Simultaneously, the Bay of Bengal had been a centre of naval activity; *HMIS Sophie Marie* had sunk after hitting a mine, four merchant ships were lost, *HMIS Ramdas* was damaged while the rest of the Indian ships remained deployed against Japanese submarines and for convoy defence. The last ship to sail from the Chatham Jetty at Port Blair left on March 13, 1942.

✓ The Japanese naval ships² swooped on the Ross and Chatham Islands at Port Blair on the night of March 23, 1942 and at 4 a.m. they fired their first shot blowing up Port Blair's wireless station and the telegraph office. At 6 a.m. the Japanese started landing.

Narrations of Iqbal Singh as well as those of Hugh Toye in the latter's book *The Springing Tiger* are admirable and explicit pointers towards the Japanese strategic and political aims. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's visit to the Andamans, his dream of establishing an Indian National Army Battalion and the formation of the Provisional Indian Government have been high-

lighted at some length with a convincing conclusion that "the Japanese had no intention of handing over any effective power."

It would appear that Netaji had been convinced that the Japanese were genuinely interested in establishing a "co-prosperity sphere". The proposal of stationing the Indian National Army³ contingent in the Andamans had, however, been vetoed by the Nippon Government even before Netaji's arrival. He arrived alone and was received by Admiral Ishikawa, the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Army, in a ceremonial welcome. Toye states, "The Admiral, in agreeing to the appointment of an Indian Chief Commissioner, told Netaji that for cogent strategic reasons, there would be no complete handover during the war, but that if the Commissioner was prepared to cooperate, some departments of civil administration could be transferred . . . on the second and last day of Netaji's visit, there was a public meeting in his honour . . . Netaji talked about the formation of the Provisional Indian Government and dwelt on his aim to seek the help of the Japanese Government in the fight for India's freedom. Therefore, he said, it was incumbent upon the Indians to cooperate with the Japanese . . ." ⁴

There was a complete lack of enthusiasm among the local people about Netaji's visit, possibly on account of the horrifying experiences and torture. Even the local liaison officers attending on Netaji could not have a word with him on account of fear. This visit was also his last.

There is no evidence to establish or ascertain whether Netaji raised any objection to the Japanese Admiral's administrative arrangements or for having taken up the matter with the Japanese Prime Minister. There are, however, records to show that Lieutenant Colonel Loganathan, the Chief Commissioner designate, did arrive at Port Blair on February 22, 1944 but never in effect took over that post. The Islands, therefore, remained under Japanese control until their evacuation during August 1945.

Japanese occupation of the Islands once again emphasised the importance of our eastern sentinels⁵ and in August 1943, Indian Command's Joint Planning Staff discussed the "capture and retention" of these islands. The main advantages reflected in their paper dated October 20, 1943 were: denying the Japanese of an advanced base and using the same for allied intelligence and anti-shipping purposes. Consequently, the Joint Planning Staff Paper dated August 15, 1945 recommended that the C-in-C India should be invited to accept responsibility for the reoccupation.

In the interim period, however, it was felt that there was a spurt in Japanese naval activity⁶ in the Andaman Seas and a series of anti-shipping strikes were carried out by allied destroyers during February and March of 1945. Reinforcement provided in the following month bombarded the airfield and other targets at Nicobar Islands as well as airfields, batteries and shipping off Port Blair.

In the far Eastern theatre the tide had turned much against the Japanese. The first nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945; two days later the U.S.S.R. declared war on Japan and on August 9, the Allies

dropped the second nuclear bomb on Nagasaki. The remaining few days of the War witnessed the Russian invasion of Manchuria and their entry into North Korea. The Japanese surrendered unconditionally on August 14, 1945.

The war at sea, a compilation of the British Admiralty's Historical Section, gives an account of Operation Popcorn—the operation to reoccupy the Andaman and Nicobar islands. *Bandra*,⁷ a 'mercy ship' carrying supplies for prisoners-of-war and those living in Port Blair, escorted by the Indian Navy sloop *Narbada*, left Calcutta on September 22, arrived at Port Blair four days later and remained there as a guard ship. The convoy for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands sailed from Calcutta on October 3 and the 116th Brigade landed at Port Blair on October 7, 1945 where the brigade commander, Brigadier A. J. Solomon, accepted the formal surrender⁸ of the Japanese.

Atrocities on the locals in the Islands during Japanese occupation are too well-known and their post-war plight has also been vividly described by Iqbal Singh in *The Andaman Story*. The account of naval operation has been compiled mainly from the recollections of those who participated in these and the writings of Sir Compton Mackenzie, who arrived in Port Blair on board *Narbada* on February 23, 1947.

When the convoy⁹ bringing the allied troops and supplies arrived to occupy the Andamans in October 1945, they found *Narbada*, the flagship of the Royal Indian Navy, already anchored in the deep sea harbour of Port Blair. Prior to the arrival of the main force, she had performed a number of important tasks to facilitate reoccupation. The Japanese authorities, led by Vice Admiral Teize Hara had been interrogated in detail regarding minefields and anchorages to establish safe anchorage for the allied incoming ships. *Narbada* had also organised landings on the outlying island to search for people. Those found on Havelock, Nancowry and Long Islands had grim tales of hardships to tell. Due care and treatment was provided on board the *Narbada*. With Lieutenant Commander J.E. Baylies, RIN, in command she kept a vigilant watch offshore during allied landing for reoccupation.

On arrival, larger ships of the convoy anchored at the eastern end of the harbour and the Navy commenced landing of troops. Landing craft sped past the flagship carrying the contingent of 8/5 Rajputana Rifles. The troops landed in assault order, fully armed and without any resistance or incident. Positions were secured and a headquarters established soon thereafter.

Lieutenant K.R. Nair (who later rose to the rank of Rear Admiral and was the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command), narrates, "*HMIS Narbada and Jumna* were part of a British Task Force¹ that bombarded Japanese positions at Sabang on Pulo Ve Island at the entrance to the Straits of Malacca, in mid 1945. Our ships were commended on their good gunnery."¹⁰

Immediately after the Japanese surrender in August 1945, the *Narbada* was ordered to the Andaman waters and the surrender of the Japanese garrison at Car Nicobar took place on board the ship, Captain M.H. St.L. Nott, RIN accepting the surrender from the Japanese Brigadier. The samurai sword and

the Japanese flag surrendered on that occasion graced *Narbada's* wardroom (officers' mess).

Japanese minefields in the Andamans and Nicobars were swept by the 37th Minesweeping Flotilla¹¹ of the RIN consisting of ten Bathurst and Bangor class minesweepers. The Flotilla was commanded by Lieutenant Commander R.D. Katari. Minesweeping was completed in about six months time.

Regarding the Japanese strength and naval activity, Rear Admiral Nair recalls, "*Narbada* proceeded to Port Blair from Car Nicobar. Japanese forces were in fair strength, say at least two or three battalions in Port Blair. A large portion of them appeared to be pioneers employed in reconstruction and other works. No Japanese vessel was in harbour while we were there in August 1945. Later on when *Narbada* visited Port Blair again in December of the same year, there were three Japanese destroyers employed in taking the Japanese troops away. They used to load so many troops that the whole upper decks seemed to be packed with men in khaki. Where they were being taken, whether to prison camps in Singapore or back home to Japan, I do not know.

"I remember clearly walking around Port Blair and noticing that the Japanese had installed guns of various makes and calibres covering all the approaches to the harbour. They had installed six-inch gun mountings at the South and Atlanta Points overlooking the harbour. These were of English make and obviously brought from Singapore. It must have been quite a feat getting these ashore and uphill there.

"There were also several well-sited lookout posts provided with the largest binoculars that I have ever seen. One such pair of binoculars mounted on a tripod was taken on board the *Narbada*. It used to be kept on one wing of the bridge while at sea and on the quarterdeck while in harbour. Later when *Narbada* was at the Naval Anchorage at Bombay, it was fun watching the goings on on the first floor of the Taj!"

Transfer of islands to independent India

The military administration¹² after the Japanese surrender was supposed to last for six months but in actual fact the administration was handed over to civilian authorities on February 7, 1946 with N.K. Patterson taking over as the Chief Commissioner. In February 1947 he handed over charge to Inamul-Majid of the Indian Civil Service, the first Indian for that post.

During the post-War days, when independence and division of India was being discussed in India and Britain, the geostrategic importance and utility of Andaman and Nicobar Islands continued to occupy the British mind. From the records it is abundantly clear that the British were most reluctant to lose their hold over these Islands and therefore tried to disassociate this territory while negotiating the Indian and Pakistan boundaries. In an appreciation¹³ "The strategic implications at inclusion of Pakistan in the British Commonwealth," Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, the then Commander-in-Chief, elaborated the vital Commonwealth interest¹⁴ in the Indian ocean;

(oil supplies, control of eastern and western approaches, air communications to Iraq, Ceylon, Burma and Malaya, and the control of the seas and island territories for Commonwealth use). In this appreciation Sir Claude stated: "Should India be unfriendly or liable to be influenced by a power, such as Russia, China or Japan, hostile to the British Commonwealth, our strategic position in the Indian Ocean would become untenable and our communications with New Zealand and Australia most insecure."

✓ In March 1947, India Office had asked for the comments of the Chiefs of Staff on the inclusion or otherwise of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the proposed transfer of power to India, wherein it was stated that "these islands have no racial connection with India." Simultaneously in a letter to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell Lord Pathick Lawrence said: "... attention has been focussed here on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Chiefs of Staff have been giving consideration ... and have represented that from the strategic point of view it is most desirable that we should retain British Sovereignty over the Islands, and that if that is not possible, we should at least conclude a special agreement with India allowing us full freedom to take what defensive measures we consider necessary ..."¹⁵

While the British continued to deliberate the issue and the possibilities of retaining small units of the Royal Air Force at certain airports in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and using them as staging ports, Field Marshal Wavell in India expressed his fears about maintaining British Sovereignty on the islands as he thought it would only stir up a hornet's nest. In his reply dated March 19, 1947 he wrote to Lord Pathick Lawrence: "... you will appreciate, of course, that the islands are a part of India, and would not easily be given up by the Indian Government except in return for some very special consideration. The only chance of securing the use of these Islands as a defensive outpost would presumably be to get the matter covered in a general defence agreement ..."¹⁶

The Home Secretary to the Government of India had also prepared a paper on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands which was discussed at the Viceroy's staff meeting held on April 10, 1947. In the context of defence and quite contrary to the British viewpoint it was stated: "The strategic value of the Islands was assessed by India's Defence Department and the three Service Headquarters were of the considered opinion that the Islands were not required for the development of a Naval Base or for positioning a military garrison but a small meteorological station would be located in the Islands for the benefit of the Air Force."¹⁷

✓ Continued insistence for the retention of Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the British Ministry of Defence set in motion lengthy debates and dialogues at the political and administrative levels not only in Britain and India but also between Burma, Australia and the representatives of Pakistan. The issue also engulfed the Laccadive Islands which were also proposed to be retained by the British as a staging post for air communication between Masira and Ceylon or a link in the overall Commonwealth communication network.

Accounts of various Bills of Legislatures, Proceedings of the Committees, Conferences, meetings and documents have been succinctly projected in *Transfer of Power 1942-47*. In the context of Naval History it would suffice to give viewpoints of various governments and agencies.

✓ In pursuance of their objective, the British Government decided that nothing should be done in legislation¹⁸ or said to the Indian leaders to suggest that His Majesty's Government accepted the view that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands could be regarded as an organic part of British India. In their view, their status was comparable to that of the Settlement of Aden, administrative responsibility of which was in 1936, by Order-in-Council under the Government of India Act 1935. The British felt that it was not desirable that the Viceroy should take the initiative in raising the issue with the Indian leaders. The British were obviously aware that the Indian leaders would object vehemently when the Bill of Legislation regarding the independence of States was published. Consideration was also given for introducing an amendment while the Bill was in passage, if necessary, to meet the Indian reaction after its publication. After much discussions of files the matter was left to the Viceroy in Delhi to handle if the situation arose.

The British Government and the Viceroy had a difficult task to justify the retention of the Andaman and Nicobar islands under British sovereignty as earlier the India and Burma Committee had not made any specific provision in the draft Bill on this account. Besides, Sardar Patel had already taken a stand with Viscount Mountbatten that "the Congress Party certainly regarded the islands as part of British India and that these were a Chief Commissioner's province under the Government of India Act 1935." It was obviously difficult for the Viceroy to go along with the directives from London.

✓ Mountbatten wrote back from India: "It is, however, becoming increasingly clear to me that any attempt by His Majesty's Government to claim the Andaman Islands as colonies will cause an absolute flare up throughout the length and breadth of India My own position will be permanently undermined if I were to act on behalf of His Majesty's Government in this matter; it will, therefore, have to be left to the High Commissioner or some other authority. But I believe the only reasonable solution would be to suggest some form of joint control or a leasing of the naval and air bases treaty The one thing I am quite certain about is that any high-handed action by His Majesty's Government about these islands at this moment will destroy all the good feelings which now exist between the two countries. . . ." ¹⁹

Reiterating the British stand, the Secretary of State in his telegram to Mountbatten replied: "It is clear, therefore, that we have to make definite choice between (a) separating Andamans and Nicobars from India by British Legislation (b) including islands in territory transferred to one of the new Indian Dominions (presumably India as distinct from Pakistan) and relying solely on subsequent negotiations. . . . Draft bill which is in transit to you deals with matters, on lines at (a). . . . We desire to have your advice urgently. . . ." ²⁰

On June 12, 1947, Mountbatten in his report to Earl of Listowel (Secretary of State for India and Burma) expressed his views on the reaction of the British proposal in the Indian Press and proposed negotiations with the political representatives of the two dominions to work out an acceptable solution. He said: "A statement appeared in the *Times of India* on June 9 saying that it is reliably understood that Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to be ceded to the British . . . This has brought a sharp rejoinder in the *Hindustan Times* on June 11 to the effect that British Government have not raised the question of the future of these Islands with the Interim Government and that if any suggestion of the type is mentioned hereafter, it will be summarily rejected. In my opinion there can no question of raising this controversial subject at the present delicate stage . . ." ²¹

The Viceroy's ²² fears about a violent reaction in the Indian subcontinent evoked an immediate response from the Secretary of State who within hours communicated to Mountbatten that the British Cabinet Committee were now of the view that "Clause 16 of the Bill in its existing form would have to be omitted but if no other provision is inserted, Islands will automatically become a part of free India by virtue of clause 2(1) of the Bill."

It would appear that in spite of the crisis in London, British diplomacy was quick on the uptake. Continued the Secretary of State to Mountbatten: "We note that Muslim League claim that they are entitled to a share in the Andamans as an All-India asset. . . and we should avoid, if possible, including the Andamans in either Indian Dominion pending discussions about them." ²³ The telegram also covered the future of the Laccadives on strategic grounds and discussed "their transfer or otherwise to India or Pakistan." It culminated in the expression of the British Government's decision to retain their sovereignty over the Andamans, Nicobars and the Laccadives.

On June 15, 1947, Mountbatten discussed the issue at his 45th Staff Meeting. The Viceroy having sensed the intensity of Indian sentiments was cautious and circumspect in regard to raising the topic during discussion on the Independence Bill. He even considered suggesting retention of Nancowry and Car Nicobar by the British and handing over the Andamans to India. Minutes of this meeting are quite interesting and state that "His Excellency was amazed to find in the draft Bill provision that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands should cease to be part of India after August 15. But it was not for him to attempt to disguise the intentions and desires of His Majesty's Government in this respect." ²⁴ He considered that it would be better to allow this paragraph to be circulated to the leaders; to come out into the open and then to try to negotiate an agreement with them.

London continued to feel that the Islands should not be handed over to India or Pakistan and suggested that instead of asking for the separation of the Islands they should seek permission for their continued use and to propose that it would be better if these islands were to be administered ²⁵ by a Commissioner under the Governor General of India. Based on the Viceroy's recommendation, it was understood that there was no question of raising the controversial issue at that juncture.

While the Indian leaders were not aware of British intentions, they were apparently quite prepared to consider extending staging facilities on these islands to aircraft of the Royal Air Force after independence. However, constant exchange of ideas continued during June and London yielded in deleting Clause 16 of the Bill and revising it with amended Clause 15 (Appendix 'B') which gave little more leverage to the Viceroy in favouring Indian sentiments.

By July 5, Lord Listowel had conveyed the decision of the British Cabinet Committee to Mountbatten in a telegram which read: "Geographical position of these Islands makes it impossible to assign them to Pakistan, nor did any form of joint control by both India and Pakistan seem to us practicable. We felt that to exclude Islands altogether from either India or Pakistan would not be acceptable."²⁶

Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah²⁷ reacted sharply and met the Viceroy the same day and handed over a telegram addressed to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition protesting against the exclusion of the Andamans from the Bill. Further, that there was no machinery to ensure that the assets were fairly divided and their transfer was correctly implemented. Mr. Jinnah's telegram continued: "Clause 2 of Indian Independence Bill²⁸ allots Andaman and Nicobar Islands to Dominion of India. These islands have never formed subject to discussion or agreement between parties at any time. Their sudden inclusion in India raises very grave issue. They are not part of India historically or geographically. They were British possessions administered by Government of India and are not in same category as other Chief Commissioners' Provinces being reserved to Governor General under Constitution Act 1935. Majority of population consists of tribes who are not connected with peoples of India by ethnical, religious or cultural ties. Pakistan's claim to these islands is very strong since only channel of communication between Eastern and Western Pakistan is by sea and these islands occupy important strategic position on sea route and provide refuelling bases. Dominion of India have no claim. They should form part of Pakistan."

While Mr. Jinnah's protest raked the issue at London again and gave fresh fuel for the British Chiefs of Staff, who once again prepared a fresh paper emphasising the importance of the Indian Islands for Commonwealth Defence Commitments in the Far East and once again with the proposal that these should be retained by the British, apparently London decided against further discussion on the sensitive subject. It was felt prudent to go along the decision of the 35th meeting of India and Burma Committee of June 25, 1947 wherein it was stated in regard to Clause 16 of the Bill that attempt should be made to convince Indian leaders that if the proposal to administer these islands by a Chief Commissioner was not acceptable, the best solution to the virtual *impasse* was joint ownership of the Islands by the two Dominions at the time of their formation to be followed by negotiations for extending certain facilities to the British Air Force and the Navy. The Committee noted: "The Viceroy had come to the firm conclusion that no provision

should be included in the Bill about the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In his view, we should have to seek to obtain such strategic facilities as we might require, by negotiations through the High Commissioner for India in due course.”²⁹ The Committee thought, however, that “the Viceroy should be asked to put to the Indian leaders the clause to the effect that these islands would belong to the two Indian Dominions jointly pending agreement unless he was convinced that this would have definitely unfortunate repercussions. It could be put to them on the basis that His Majesty’s Government thought that this would be convenient arrangement between the two Dominions. The Viceroy should, however, be informed that, if the Indian leaders could not agree to it, we should be prepared to omit any reference to these Islands from the Bill and to leave our interests to be dealt with by negotiations with the new Dominion of India alone.”

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4. The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, February 1946

“DURING THE WINTER of 1945-46, the world picture was one of unrest and upheaval—international, national and domestic. The Indian scene, in addition to the world-wide economic and domestic upset, showed high political tension and widespread campaign for freedom from British control. The INA trials had also taken place in late 1945. And within the Indian scene was that of the Royal Indian Navy—a young over-expanded Service rapidly disintegrating in the rush to demobilise, with the inspiration and binding incentive of a common war unity and war effort gone, living in a supercharged political atmosphere with its own additional feelings of disappointment, apprehension, uncertainty and unredressed grievances.”¹ This is how the post-World War II scenario has been described just prior to the traumatic experience the Royal Indian Navy had of the mutiny in February 1946.

By the time the War ended in 1945, the Service² had grown very rapidly. From a glorified flotilla with eight ships, some small craft and minimal shore facilities with a strength of about 1500 personnel prior to the War in 1939 into a Service virtually bursting at its seams with nearly 300 ships and craft, some designed and built as naval vessels and the rest commandeered from all possible sources and converted and suitably armed for the purpose, a large number of shore establishments and over 25,000 officers and men. The main task facing the naval authorities at that time was two-fold—decommissioning and assigning peacetime roles to a large number of ships and craft and, what was more important, the demobilisation, resettlement and rehabilitation of several officers and ratings belonging to a wide variety of ethnic, cultural, religious, educational, professional, linguistic and social background. The latter assumed grim and strident overtones with the winding up of the numerous organisations which had mushroomed in a most ad hoc manner all over the country during the War. This was further aggravated by the decision taken to reduce the Service to a much smaller force, based on the assessment of the time that the potential enemies of the Allied Forces in the region had already been totally annihilated!

Salient features of the mutiny

Some of the broad features of the mutiny³ were: Bombay—processions

taken out by the Naval ratings; the shouting of slogans; burning of the American Flag in the U.S. Information Office; hoisting the Congress, Muslim League and 'Jai Hind' flags; lowering of the Naval Ensign; and some acts of violence and exchange of fire in the Castle Barracks between the mutineers and military personnel who had been called in to quell the mutiny. Karachi—acts of violence on *HMIS Bahadur* and *HMIS Himalaya* and a procession from there to *HMIS Chamak* (Radar School); and an exchange of fire between the military and the mutineers of *HMIS Hindustan*, a sloop. At other places, generally non-violent measures such as refusal to work and hunger strike were resorted to. With rare exceptions, the behaviour of the mutineers towards their officers was courteous with the usual marks of respect.

The casualties³ suffered by the mutineers and the others included one rating killed and six wounded, one RIN officer killed and one wounded, two British Other Ranks wounded in Bombay, and eight ratings killed and 33 wounded (including British soldiers) in Karachi.

In response to appeals made by political leaders of eminence such as Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the mutineers later surrendered. The mutiny, however, had wide repercussions all over the country and the Central Legislative Assembly discussed it on February 22 and 23, 1946. When it was taken up at the Defence Consultative Committee Meeting held on March 8, 1946, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, the then Commander-in-Chief of the three Services, recommended a Commission of Enquiry at the conclusion of the discussions. The Commission, as proposed by him, was to enquire into and report on "the causes and origin of the recent mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy."

The formal announcement on the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry was subsequently made by the War Department in April 1946. The Commission⁴ was to consist of: Chairman—The Honourable Sir Saiyed Fazi Ali, Chief Justice of Patna High Court; Judicial Members—Mr. Justice K.S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, Chief Justice of the then Cochin State and Mr. Justice M.C. Mahajan, Judge of the Lahore High Court; Service Members—Vice Admiral W.R. Patterson, Flag Officer Commanding the Cruiser Squadron in the East Indies Fleet and Major General T.W. Rees, Commander of the Fourth Indian Division.

THE MUTINY

The Mutiny⁵ originated on February 18, 1946 on the then *HMIS Talwar*, the Navy's Wireless Communication Establishment in Bombay (even shore establishments are referred to as ships in naval parlance) and then spread to various naval ships⁶ and establishments all over the country and even beyond Indian shores. Only a few remained unaffected. Ten establishments and 45 ships, besides 11 miscellaneous ships and four flotillas, joined the mutiny. The major shore establishments and ships involved were:

BOMBAY

The Royal Indian Navy Depot: This comprised the Castle Barracks (now

Naval Barracks) which housed about 900 ratings belonging to the ships in the Naval Dockyard and those awaiting appointment to other ships or to the release centres, the Fort Barracks which housed the H.O. (Hostilities Only) ratings, the Central Communication Office which handled all signal traffic for naval authorities in Bombay, the Colaba Receiving Station which was a wireless receiving station manned by about 80 ratings, the Mahul Wireless Station in Trombay Island, 14 miles away from Bombay, which housed the naval wireless transmitters and was staffed by about 50 ratings and the RIN Hospital at Sewri which had a bed strength of 300 and a 220 strong staff including nursing staff known as Sick Berth Attendants.

Other Establishments: *HMIS Talwar* which trained all visual and wireless communication ratings; *HMIS Machlimar* at Versova, 12 miles away from Bombay, which was manned by 300 ratings and which imparted training in anti-submarine operations; *HMIS Hamla* at Marve, 20 miles away from Bombay, which housed the Landing Craft Wing of the RIN with about 600 ratings; *HMIS Kakauri*, the demobilisation centre housing over 1400 ratings; *HMIS Cheetah*, the second demobilisation centre situated on Trombay Island; *HMIS Akbar* situated at Kolsett, 28 miles away from Bombay, and comprising a cookery school, a physical training centre, a few units to conduct some miscellaneous courses and a training school which undertook the basic training of 3000 recruits at a time for Special Service ratings (500 were there at the time of the mutiny); and *HMIS Feroze*, situated on Malabar Hill, Bombay which initially undertook training of Reserve Officers and later became the demobilisation centre for officers (it had 120 ratings at the time of the mutiny).

Ships: Sloops—*HMIS Narbada* and *Jumna*; Frigate—*HMIS Dhanush*; Corvettes—*HMIS Gondwana*, *Assam*, *Maharatta* and *Sind*; Fleet Minesweepers—*HMIS Kumaon*, *Kathiawar*, *Khyber*, *Punjab*, *Bombay*, *Madras*, *Orissa*, and *Oudh*; Old Sloops—*HMIS Clive* and *Lawrence*; Trawlers—*HMIS Agra*, *Cuttack*, *Karachi*, *Lahore*, *Madura*, *Nautilus*, *Nasik*, *Patna*, *Poona*, *Rampur*, *Berar*, *Amritsar* and *Cochin*; Ex-Persian Gunboats—*HMIS Nilam*, *Moti*, *Lal* and *Heera*; Auxiliary Vessels—*HMIS Kalavati*, *Ramdas*, *Dipavati* and *Bhadravati*; there were also a few Motor Minesweepers.

KARACHI

Shore Establishments: *HMIS Bahadur*, Boy's Training Establishment, *Chamak*, the Radar School and *Himalaya* the Gunnery School.

Ships: *HMIS Hindustan* and *Travancore*; Motor Launch 1262.

MADRAS

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Adyar*.

CALCUTTA

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Hooghly* (now *INS Netaji Subhash*).

Ship: *HMIS Rajputana*.

COCHIN

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Venduruthy*.

Ships: *HMIS Baroda* and some launches, etc.

LONAVLA

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Shivaji*, the Navy's Mechanical Training Establishment, which trained artificers and stokers. It could accommodate 800 ratings.

JAMNAGAR

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Valsura*, the Electrical and Torpedo Training School, which accommodated about 300 ratings.

VISHAKHAPATNAM

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Circars*.

Ships: *HMIS Sonavati*, *Ahmedabad* and *Shillong*; and certain flotillas.

MANDAPAM

Shore Establishment: *HMIS Tengra*.

ADEN

Shore Establishment: W/T Station.

BAHRAIN

Shore Establishment: W/T Station.

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

Ships: *HMIS Rohilkhand*, *Hongkong*, *Deccan*, *Bengal*, *Bihar*, *Baluchistan* and *Kistna*.

NEW DELHI

Shore Establishment: *HMIS India*.

The following ships and establishments, however, did not mutiny:

HMIS Shamsher, a frigate—the solitary exception at Bombay; *HMIS Dilawar*, a Boys' Training Establishment, and Motor Launch 1261 at Karachi; a sloop, at Madras; *HMIS Barracuda*, a depot ship, at Calcutta; Motor Minesweeper 154, a launch at Cochin; *HMIS Tir*, a frigate at Vishakhapatnam; *HMIS Investigator*, a survey ship and *Llanstephen Castle*, a depot ship at Trincomalee; *HMIS Cauvery* and *HMIS Sulej*, both sloops in the Pacific and *HMIS Calcutta*, which was at sea.

Sub-Lieutenant R.K.S. Ghandhi (later Vice Admiral and Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command) has the following to say with regard to *HMIS Shamsher*, the only ship which did not participate in the Mutiny at Bombay:

“After completing my Sub-Lieutenant Courses in England, I arrived back

in India in October 1945 and joined *HMIS Shamsher*. *Shamsher* was a river class frigate which we had recently acquired from the Royal Navy and I was part of its first commission. The officers at that time were, Commanding Officer Lieutenant Krishnan, Executive Officer Lieutenant Gautam Singh, Engineer Officer Lieutenant Commander Bhushan, Senior Engineer Lieutenant Zahid Hassain, Surgeon Lieutenant Mohinder Singh, Supply Officer Lieutenant E.L. Pinto, Communication Officer Lieutenant Ameer Aslam and Sub-Lieutenant Anthony Pillai. There were a couple of Britishers also; one was Lieutenant Hammond and the other was a Sub-Lieutenant whose name I forgot. When I joined, I was the Navigating Officer, Gunnery Officer and incharge of the mess and wines.

“At that time *Shamsher* was a test ship and probably the Britishers were trying it as an experiment, in that it was practically, *in toto*, a ship manned by Indian officers. This period was one of great confusion and speculation amongst the reserve officers of the Indian Navy. The British Government had decided that the post-War strength of the Indian Navy was to be an induction of only 100 reserve officers to the permanent cadre of which 66 would be Indians and 34 would be British. Therefore, a great deal of time and energy was spent by reserve officers sitting at the Coffee House discussing their future employment. I well remember at that time that I was shocked to see officers spending so much of their working hours away from their ships and in the evening also there would hardly be any officer on board to look after the men.

“By and large, *Shamsher* was a happy ship, an efficient ship, and as we did a great deal of sea time, we were away from the flesh pots of Bombay, which all helped. Krishnan was a great leader and even those days he always called himself Captain.

“In February 1946 (the exact date I do not remember), we were at sea on passage Northwards to Bombay. During the dog watches, (evening duty hours), we received a message from Bombay W/T that the Royal Indian Navy sailors mutinied and that the leader had requested all ships to do likewise. On the heels of the first signal, we received another signal giving the list of the ships that had mutinied. Ameer Aslam was the Communication Officer who dashed up to the bridge and showed me this signal, having informed me that he had given a copy to the Captain. As soon as I saw this signal, I rushed downstairs and told the Captain that it was our duty—and I proposed to him—that we enter Bombay Harbour and bombard the Royal Bombay Yacht Club. It must be remembered that before Independence the Royal Bombay Yacht Club did not admit any Indians and this was a very sore point with me. When I told Lieutenant Krishnan that we should bombard the Yacht Club he was quite shocked and taken aback and turned round to me and said ‘thank you. Please go up to the bridge and keep watch’—or words to this effect and he made me feel that this was not a very mature thing to do. I pleaded with him and told him once again that we must open fire on the Yacht Club at Bombay. He once again told me to go up to the bridge which I did.

"Whilst I was on the bridge, Ameer Aslam and I were discussing the news and he having come up through the lower deck, a communication sailor, knew some of the men whose names were being mentioned as leaders of the mutiny. Aslam shortly thereafter went downstairs, came back again to tell me that there was a conference going on in the Commanding Officer's cabin with all the senior officers, including Lieutenant Hammond.

"By this time, the lower deck (sailors quarters) had already got the information that a mutiny had taken place and from the bridge I could see small knots of sailors talking and gossiping.

"At about 8.00 p.m. we received a message from the Flag Officer, Bombay, informing us that an aircraft had ditched about 200 miles west of Bombay and that we were to proceed there and carry out a search. The Captain came up to the bridge and asked me to lay out the course to the ditched aircraft and thereafter we altered course north-westward for this position. The sailors of course knew at once that instead of entering Bombay harbour and joining their shipmates in mutiny, we had altered the course of the ship and feelings began to get hot on the lower deck.

"After night rounds, Gautam Singh informed the Captain that the men were impatient and that we should clear lower deck and explain the situation to them. Lieutenant Krishnan, knowing my views and presuming quite rightly that I was a hot head, directed that I go up to the bridge and keep watch while he addressed the lower deck and the officers. Therefore, I was not actually present to hear Krishnan's famous speech but Aslam came up immediately after and told me of the very good theatrical performance of the Commanding Officer. He explained to the men what mutiny was. He further explained to them that he was as much an Indian as any one else. He tore open his shirt and exclaimed that if his body was cut, black Indian blood would flow out of it. He managed to calm down the sailors and told them that we were on a task of mercy to search for a ditched aircraft.

"About 48 hours later we entered Bombay harbour to find the entire Indian Navy at anchor with black flags flying from the mastheads. Of course before that we had heard on the All India Radio that Gorkha soldiers had boarded our ring leaders' ship at Karachi and that for all intents and purpose the mutiny was over and the ring leaders behind bars. As we entered Bombay harbour, it was such a sad sight to see soldiers in Khaki uniform with guns on the upper deck of our ships. We were also asked to hoist the black flag but this the Captain refused to do as all of us had told him that we would not do it when we are the only ship which never mutinied.

"As soon as we entered and the gangway was lowered, a boat came alongside and a fair-haired officer of the rank of Lieutenant stepped on board and I overheard him telling Lieutenant Krishnan that he wanted the firing pin mechanisms from my guns, rifles and revolvers. I told the Captain that I refuse to give the firing pins to this Britisher whereupon both officers laughed and Lieutenant Krishnan introduced me to Lieutenant Mukat Kaul whom I have known ever since. At that time Kaul had absolute blonde hair,

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"Many years after the event, Krishnan told me that he had engineered with Aslam the diversionary signal for the ditched aircraft!"

Lieutenant Krishnan, who won the Distinguished Service Cross in action in the Persian Gulf in 1941, rose to the rank of Vice Admiral and was the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command before retirement. He was present at the time of Pakistani General Niazi's surrender to our forces in December 1971 at Dhaka after the Indo-Pak conflict. He died in 1981.

Discipline during the war

During World War II, the discipline⁸ in the RIN appeared to have been satisfactory on the whole. Many senior officers and others even described it as excellent! The Commission, however, stated: "one cannot overlook the numerous mutinies which have occurred in Navy's ships and Establishments during the War." There were nine mutinies⁹ between 1942 and 1945 and the Commission recorded that "the manner in which the mutinies originated show that many of the ratings were prone to indiscipline and had exaggerated notions about their rights which reacted unfavourably on their sense of duty and loyalty to the Service. The investigation which followed some of the mutinies has further disclosed that there were faults in the administration and that there was considerable room for improvement in the conditions of Service." After the mutiny in March 1942 in the Mechanical Training Establishment at Bombay, the then Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy, Vice Admiral Sir Herbert Fitzherbert came to the conclusion¹⁰ that "Had the officers maintained proper contact with the apprentices and had the general discipline of the Establishment been in a satisfactory state, the outbreak of indiscipline could not have occurred." In January 1943 Admiral Fitzherbert was so alarmed at the state of indiscipline in the Navy that he found it necessary to circulate the following note to the Commanding Officers of all the ships and Establishments:

"I am disturbed over the number of cases of insubordination which have occurred recently in His Majesty's Indian Ships. The frequency with which these cases have occurred points to the fact that there is something inherently wrong with the way Ships' Companies have been handled by their officers.

"I have given the fullest consideration to the recent causes and am convinced that in nearly all cases, the root cause was the mishandling of the situation by the officers, usually at a very early stage.

"Napoleon said 'There are not bad men, there are only bad officers.' The truth of this statement is amply borne out by recent happenings. It is necessary for me to enunciate certain truths concerning the handling of the men which should be known but are apparently not appreciated by all officers.

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“Whilst I was on the bridge, Ameer Aslam and I were discussing the news and he having come up through the lower deck, a communication sailor, knew some of the men whose names were being mentioned as leaders of the mutiny. Aslam shortly thereafter went downstairs, came back again to tell me that there was a conference going on in the Commanding Officer’s cabin with all the senior officers, including Lieutenant Hammond.

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"It must be remembered that no two men are alike. All have different personalities and characteristics and the same treatment for the same offence is rarely justified. In this connection, I would once again stress the importance of the Divisional Officer not only knowing the name of every man in his division but also the details of his family.

"It is a truism to say that all men will respond to decent treatment. Of course, they will. The fact that all men are human seems to be forgotten frequently.

"The fact that a case should be dealt with completely at the very beginning is an important one. Several cases have occurred recently in which, it is obvious, that trouble was allowed to boil up through inadequate steps being taken at the outset.

"No request should ever be put to one side but should be fully enquired into and if the request cannot be approved, the fullest possible explanation should be given as to the reason for the request not being approved.

"It will be evident to all who study our men that a definite 'fear complex' exists which puts younger and weaker ratings at the mercy of an unscrupulous rating with a stronger character. The possibility of this difficulty occurring must be constantly borne in mind and immediate steps must be taken to deal with it.

"The object which all officers should endeavour to achieve is the full realisation by every man in the Ship's Company that the officers have the welfare of the men at heart. This can only be achieved by personal example, close and understanding contact and intelligent propaganda.

"I wish to impress on all officers the vital necessity for intelligent and tactful handling of their men at all times. Firmness is essential in many cases but this should not be mistaken for bullying even by the most critical.

"The practice of officers always taking the first opportunity of leaving their ships on arrival in harbour is to cease. Any officer is only entitled to leave his ship when he is fully satisfied that there is not the slightest need for his presence on board and that no man in his division has any need of his advice or assistance.

"If officers do their work properly, there should not be slightest reason why the Ship's Companies of our little ships should not be very happy families.

"This letter is to be brought to the notice of all officers and Commanding Officers are to discuss it with all officers under their command."¹¹

The Commission records that notwithstanding Admiral Fitzherbert's warning and directive, the relations between the officers and men remained unhappy and the diagnosis made nearly three years earlier that much of the discontent among the men was due to the indifference and unsympathetic attitude of a large number of officers still holds good. The previous mutinies,¹²

in the Commission's opinion, undoubtedly had a bearing on the mutiny of February 1946 insofar as they showed that there was discontent and dissatisfaction in the Service and some of the grievances required immediate redressal. They should have served as warnings to the naval authorities and compelled them to examine the conditions in the Service as a whole and also those in the Ships and Establishments which were not involved in them with a view to finding out whether there was any danger lurking around the corner. The Commission adds that another aspect of these mutinies that required to be stressed was that while those who took part in the mutinies had received their justifiable punishment, the manner in which some of them had been dealt with seemed to have contributed, to some extent, to the prevalent discontent in the Service.

Lieutenant Commander B.S. Soman (later Admiral and Chief of the Naval Staff, 1962-66) appearing before the Commission as a witness, while setting forth the causes¹³ of the Mutiny, mentioned "that the higher authorities took no notice of the warning given as early as September 1942." Evidently, he was referring to the mutiny which took place on *HMIS Orissa* in September 1942, which was found on investigation to be due to bad discipline and to the fact that there was little contact and no sympathy between the officers and men.

Racial discrimination and ill-treatment of personnel

There were many cases of injustice and ill-treatment in the RIN and these were believed by the ratings to be the outward manifestation of racial arrogance on the part of the European personnel (Dutch, French, Norwegian, Russian, Swede, Australian, Canadian, New Zealander and even South African) in the Service. The ratings and even many of the Indian officers genuinely felt that colour bar¹⁴ in all its grim nakedness was present and influenced the conduct of the Europeans towards the Indians.

When the War began, many Indians enlisted,¹⁵ firstly because they were taken in by patriotic appeals of the British Government to fight against the Nazi cult of race superiority and secondly, for the liberty of smaller nations, for the equal rights of all people and for the permanent establishment on earth of the much-advertised four freedoms of the American President! Discriminatory treatment, therefore, meted out to them naturally led to deep resentment which began to rankle in their minds. The differentiation could not even be justified as based on any so-called superiority of merit in the European. Whenever in professional, official or business contacts the Indian and the European were thrown together, the Indian found or at any rate believed that his capacity and performance were by no means inferior. In fact, during the War, when in several theatres of operation the Indian, RN and the other ratings fought together side by side, it was proved that the Indians could hold their own. In minesweeping operations in Malaya, in the coastal attacks in Arakan, impartial opinion testified to the fact that the achievements of the RIN were in every respect equal to those of the RN. For doing the same kind of work, one got paid half that of the other, the ratings in the RIN felt

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that the officers and men in the RN got better food, special hot-weather allowance, and could buy articles in the NAAFI (Navy Army Air Force Institute—concessional rate canteens) cheaper and more easily. If the RIN ratings claimed these privileges and tried to enter NAAFI canteens for instance, they were, on several occasions, insulted and even assaulted. There were innumerable instances of such treatment which obviously aroused embitterment. In fact, such discrimination¹⁶ was intolerable and was bitterly resented. The class of rating recruited during the War was better educated and hence more aware and sensitive. He therefore could not understand, nor justify why he should be subjected to such treatment from which ratings in other navies do not suffer.

The RIN, formed in 1934, inherited the old RIM officers and ratings who had very little naval training or experience. The new British and Indian officer entry was trained with the RN. Unfortunately, many of the British were those who failed to obtain a competitive vacancy in the RN. Owing to the political hostility towards the British rule, the young British officers did not feel a total commitment towards the Service. In this they were influenced by the attitude of the ex-RIM seniors, who quite often set a poor example and laid down their own norms of behaviour.

Writing in his book *Very Special Admiral*, a biography of the late Vice Admiral Godfrey, Patrick Beesly, an indulgent admirer of Godfrey, states: "The trouble was that there was little understanding of India's problem or needs in the Admiralty. Lawrence (the author was his Staff Officer in March 1947), Godfrey's future Chief of Staff, has recalled how, in 1937, when a Lieutenant Commander, he attended a meeting of the Admiralty presided over by Admiral Forbes to pick young officers for the executive and engineering branches of the RIN and the Indian and Dominion navies. It was suggested that a candidate, rejected as unsuitable for the RN, might do for the RIN. Lawrence, despite his junior rank, protested that, as India was trying to create a new Service out of nothing, they needed the pick of the recruits, not the cast-offs. This point of view had not occurred to Admiral Forbes but he was so impressed by it that he asked Lawrence to lunch and listened with great interest to what he had to say about India's Navy. Unfortunately the lack of understanding persisted and when, from time to time, RN or RNVR officers could be extracted from the Admiralty, too many of them were not really suitable, by age, health or temperament for the testing and trying duties for which they were required."

From 1939 onwards came the large wartime influx of British and Indian officers. The British comprised mostly residents in India, of every class and occupation—'box-wallas', office managers, technicians, planters and merchant service officers; many retired senior ratings and Warrant Officers of the RN were sent out as officers to India. The attitude of the resident British, who in civil life remained aloof from Indians and were now imported into the Service and their treatment of the ratings was no different to the treatment meted out by them to their previous Indian employees.

In his morale report of December 17, 1945, Lieutenant Colonel M. Haq Nawaz, the GHQ Morale and Security Officer, observed: "Practically all Indian officers who talked to me complained that there is a marked discrimination on the part of the senior British officers against the Indian officers in regard to promotions and appointments. An inefficient and inexperienced British officer is often preferred to an Indian officer who is fully qualified to do the job." The same officer in his report dated January 22, 1946 mentioned, among other things, the complaint that: "Invariably the promotions to Warrant ranks in the Seaman branch were being given to the British ratings seconded from the RN, in spite of the fact that a number of Indian ratings were fully qualified for these promotions. At the same time a number of Warrant Officer appointments were being filled by RINVR officers. As far as I could see, the senior and promising ratings were very much disgruntled about this system. They seem to have given up all hopes of promotion to the Warrant rank and if the present system is continued, it is bound to affect the morale of the senior ratings."¹⁷

Colonel A.A. Rudra from General Headquarters at that time stated that he noticed two defects¹⁸ among the Indian officers, who were always in a minority to British officers, firstly, the fear that too much mixing with ratings, Petty Officers and Chief Petty Officers, may give the impression of plotting against British officers in the matter of popularity, and secondly, the inability to stand up for any of the ratings' demands against a majority of British officers on an important issue.

The tendency of British officers to entertain European Petty Officers and ratings in the Wardrooms (Officers' Messes) of RIN ships was also greatly resented by Indian officers and ratings. Some of these Petty Officers and ratings obtained commissions in the RIN Reserve during the War but later went back to the RN to serve as ratings again. Quite a few of the Indian officers saw that these RN personnel, who had served in India as officers, were back in the RN in their proper ratings' billets.

Undoubtedly, there were good European officers also who were both efficient and popular. But looking at the number and bitterness of the complaints, the percentage of bad officers was apparently high enough to antagonise a very large number of ratings and sow in their minds feelings of acute resentment towards the European officers. As regards the Indian officers, although their number was comparatively small, some of them were also guilty of giving rough treatment and using foul language towards the ratings; to them, it was partly, a manifestation of an expression of 'forceful' power of command and partly, to 'impress' and ape the European masters.

Lieutenant Tom Sheppard,¹⁹ a British officer of the RIN who was a Staff Officer to Vice Admiral Godfrey, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RIN, at the time of the mutiny and was respected by officers and ratings both for his efficiency and integrity, in a note presented to the RIN Enquiry Commission, stated: "Our ratings have done extremely well in this war. They quite naturally consider themselves professionally superior to the Royal Navy

whom they see out here, be it in coastal forces, communications, landing craft or minesweepers. They also see the slovenly British sailors—badly dressed, not saluting, slouching about Bombay and other ports, whilst they themselves are kept up to mark. In lower deck language, their reaction must be—why the hell?”

Tom Sheppard who is now in his late sixties and lives in Eire, reminisces: “I had my own ideas about the causes (of the mutiny), which I set down in a private memo to Admiral Godfrey, who in turn used them in his report to the Commission of Enquiry, who in turn questioned me on my views. As I have never seen the report of the Commission, I am not really *au fait* with what that particular Brains Trust came out with. What I do know, as you yourself know, is that the whole scenario of 1945-1947 was dominated by the political upheaval of that period, and the findings of the Commission were inevitably influenced to some degree by the perceived need to please the new masters—very understandably.

“There was a lot of tension—the INA trials, the mutinies—or strikes as they were euphemistically termed—in the RAF and RIAF, the communal bitterness and of course, the uncertainties following the end of the War.

“As regards my view of the actual events, I believe the decision by Admiral Godfrey to use the term ‘mutiny’ rather than ‘strike’ and to treat it as such, was a hard one but I am sure, in the longer term, must be seen to be correct. It was vital that the Service should not disintegrate on the transfer of power and the secession of Pakistan. It was wonderful that the Indian Navy developed so strongly in the ensuing years and I feel that if in 1946 there had not been evidence of firm handling of the mutineers, the young Service would have got off to a bad start after August 1947. The show of force by the RAF, the threat of action by the Royal Navy, the deployment of troops round Castle Barracks, were all very sad and humiliating for us in the RIN. Nevertheless things got sorted out quite dramatically and the mutiny collapsed.

“Undoubtedly the Communication ratings must have been at the centre of disaffection. They were of a higher standard of education, more questioning of the old style of relationships between officers and ratings and very critical, understandably, of poor officers. They needed very sympathetic handling and this was not always forthcoming.

“After 35 years I still look back on my time in India with lots of happiness and nostalgia. I loved your country and its people and I always had as my ambition to serve them to the best of my ability.”²⁰

Commander Streatfield-James,²¹ who held various senior appointments in the Royal Indian Navy, is over 80 years old now. He has expressed the view that the situation at that time could not be attributed to any particular aspect of the administration. It was brought about entirely by outgrowing the disciplinary strength of the spirit of loyalty. Much had been achieved, he says, but at a very great risk due to the lack of the proper background in the hurriedly recruited officer cadre. With regard to overall control of the Service at that period of time, he states “each one of us must share some measure of blame.”

Shri R.N. Vasudeva of the Indian Administrative Service, who retired as Chief Secretary of the Government of Karnataka in 1970 and was a Supply Officer in the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve, says with regard to his last afloat posting in the Navy, "Before I opted for reversion to civilian career I worked as Supply Officer on board *HMIS Sonavati*, under the command of Captain Hill, an old seasoned sailor with nearly 40 years' experience of men. Like several other British officers, he had been drafted or opted himself to serve in the Indian Navy for the duration of war. *Sonavati* an old sloop, was on coastal patrol duty, when it returned from Calcutta to Vishakhapatnam in February 1946. On February 20, 1946, while the ship was berthed in the harbour, the ship's company suddenly struck, shouted slogans and walked off the ship's quarterdeck. Captain Hill who, like other officers on board, had little premonition of this sudden 'eruption', was taken back and sobbed like a child in his cabin, saying that he had not known mutiny in his long naval career and he wouldn't be able to live down this slur on his honour in his last years. I remember it took us some time to console him and explain him that the 'revolt' of ratings was not directed against his 'command' personally, but an incidental end-product of forces beyond the purview of the ship or its officers."²² Shri Vasudeva recalls that Hill was one of those dedicated British commanders whose professional ability, humanity, loyalty, and capability for leadership was unquestioned and, therefore, it would not be proper to opt for a simplistic diagnosis and put the blame for the mutiny wrongly on this category of officers as a class.

The inordinate drinking habit and behaviour under the influence of alcohol on board ships and ashore was also a subject of acute resentment and criticism by the ratings.²³ It was not a pleasant sight for the ratings to see their officers drunk and disorderly in the Wardroom. Many of them thought that if the officers could do what they liked in their spare time, then they themselves were entitled to do what they liked in their own spare time, but could not. Dance parties on board ships and establishments came in for contemptuous remarks of the ratings as "what the officers had done the night before." One Divisional Officer, who went to plead the case of one of his ratings for proceeding on leave as he had a wife, was brushed aside by the officer with the remark: "Has he not got another brother to husband the wife?"

Captain Percy Learmont who died recently at the age of 91 years and who had been held in considerable respect and awe in the RIN at the time, recorded his views as follows: "Young, partially trained officers have been called to positions of authority in command of small ships or as Executive Officers of large ships. Their ideas of maintaining discipline and handling men have frequently been poor in the extreme. Unfortunately of course, they have not had the benefit of the advice and assistance of trained and experienced Petty Officers. To quote one matter which has come to my notice from my informal talks with ratings—the award of punishment. In many cases there is no doubt justice has not been done and severe punishments have at times been awarded. A notion prevails that if an officer charges a man with an offence,

the officer must not be let down irrespective of the justice attached to the case.

"Secondly, without doubt there has been a great deal of unnecessary shouting if not bullying. One young officer in command of an auxiliary vessel in Calcutta once said to me that he had got his men completely under his thumb, and illustrated his remark by pressing his thumb on the table. I immediately informed him that I was not impressed in the slightest and the sooner he released the pressure and got his men in the proper place, that is wholeheartedly behind him, the better for himself and the Service.

"One cannot altogether blame the officers as they had no basic training or experience of more senior regular officer to fall back upon to guide them. The same remarks apply to Chief and Petty Officers. Here you frankly have boys of about twenty rated up, totally unfitted and untrained for such important responsibilities. It must be made clear of course that this was inevitable but it also has had an equally inevitable result disadvantageous to the whole Service."²⁴

Lieutenant Commander E. Michael Shaw, a British officer of the Royal Indian Navy who is nearly 70 years old now and lives in Cornwall, has taken great pains to record his reminiscences of the period with interesting supporting documents which were not available elsewhere.

Shaw was in command of *HMIS Talwar* from January 28, 1945 to September 29, 1945, when he was transferred as the Staff Communication Officer. He says that the appointment²⁵ of Commander F.W. King as Commanding Officer of *HMIS Talwar* was "a great surprise and disappointment to many of us" because King was not a Communication Officer. What Shaw did not further like was that he was later asked to go back to *Talwar* as the Executive Officer and this appeared to him to be a demotion!

Shaw was both efficient and popular and held in high regard by many of his Indian contemporaries. His comments on the subject of secondment of officers from the Royal Navy which he recorded in a confidential Staff Minute Sheet to the Commanding Officer, *HMIS Talwar*, make interesting reading. He refers to Admiral Godfrey's address to all regular officers and Commanding Officers during which Godfrey mentioned: "In order to officer these cruisers (future acquisitions for the Royal Indian Navy), it will be necessary to get about 400 officers on loan from the RN. As the RN is short of regular officers, these 400 will probably be RNR and RNVR officers who will be granted permanent commissions in the RIN."²⁶ Shaw's reaction to Godfrey's intention of inducting these large numbers of British officers was: if ex-RNR and RNVR officers were to be taken, why could not the number of permanent commissions given to the ex-RINR and RINVR officers be increased as many of them had had six years war experience? It was considered unlikely that the Admiralty would either permit really good officers to come to India or whether really good officers would volunteer for service in another Navy as it would be regarded as backward and detrimental to promotion (they would have to

be volunteers as a pressed man would not do the service any good); they would not be able to know the men (or have the inclination to do so); they would not be able to get on with the men because they did not know Urdu which was still considered important for Regular officers to know; to get officers of the RNR/RNVR to volunteer, they would have to be given some inducement such as special allowance or acting rank which would be hard on the existing regular officers; if six years' war experience was equivalent to 12 years peacetime experience, it should be possible, as a reward for good services and as compensation for the comparatively slow promotion they received during the war, to give one-third of their war service as additional seniority to all Regular officers; the import of 400 British officers on loan did not make the intention of nationalisation seem sincere; the problem of getting officers on loan from the RN for the RIN was very different to that of the Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Australian Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy. Shaw recorded that these were not his personal views but were only the general views of the officers so that should the Commanding Officer, *HMIS Talwar*, think it fit, he could inform the higher authorities of the existing thoughts and opinions on the induction of officers on loan from the RN. It is not difficult to imagine what reaction this Staff Minute Sheet would have had from his Commanding Officer and the higher authorities at that time!

With regard to treatment of ratings and redressal of their complaints, the lack of confidence which existed in the Service with regard to dealing with these complaints promptly and in the normal Service manner, is manifest and exemplified in the confidential letter which Shaw addressed to the Commanding Officer, *HMIS Talwar* on May 10, 1946. The letter reads, "... on Saturday, 9th February and Sunday, 10th February, I, in my capacity as Staff Communication Officer saw 14 ratings who stated that they wished to state a complaint.

"It has been my experience in this Service that ratings very rarely put in, in the proper service manner, to state a complaint. So I was determined that since these ratings had done so, I would do my best as an officer to help them and to prove that the Service system did work.

"I communicated the fact by Important Confidential Letter to Commander King, then Commanding Officer, *HMIS Talwar*, that 14 ratings had requested to see him to state a complaint.²⁷ The letter was despatched on Sunday, the 10th February.

"These ratings were seen by Commander King on Saturday, 16th February and informed that if they so desired, they could state their complaint in writing and it would be forwarded to Higher Authority.

"On Monday, 18th February, I accompanied the Flag Officer, Bombay to *HMIS Talwar* in the dog watches. The mutiny was by then in progress. One of the cries of the ratings was that no action had been taken on these ratings' requests.

"The Flag Officer Bombay then and there promised the ratings that an

immediate, full and impartial enquiry would be held to deal with this case.

“Several weeks later, I was asked by some of the ratings concerned if anything had been done about their request. I informed them that it had been forwarded to Higher Authority. At the same time I mentioned the matter to my Commanding Officer who wrote a letter to the Flag Officer, Bombay. The reply stated that ‘the result would be communicated in due course.’

“It is now three months since the alleged incident occurred and these 14 requestmen have been given no answer. I am reminded of the remark made to me by a Signaller at the Dockyard Signal Station ten minutes before they mutinied.²⁸ He said, ‘Sir, If I call you a white bastard, I shall be arrested and locked up within an hour but if an officer calls me a black bastard, nothing is done.’

“I have the temerity to suggest that the situation has been aggravated by the delay in dealing with this case. The 14 ratings to whom I made promises of seeing that their complaint would be dealt with properly have no doubt lost all confidence in me and have now classed me with the many others who say they will do a lot and do nothing.

“I now feel that I cannot exhort a rating to adhere to the correct service procedure for stating a complaint, and I consider that the delay in dealing with this much-publicised case has knocked the bottom out of the service traditional method of dealing with complaints.

“I am bringing this to your notice in a confidential letter in the hope that it may be forwarded through the proper channels as I do not wish to bring it out before the Enquiry Commission because of the damage that could be done to an already damaged Service by an unscrupulous press.”

Ex-Leading Telegraphist B.C. Dutt, who joined the RIN in the Communication Branch in 1941 and was discharged in March 1946, was a ‘prominent’ rating on the scene before the mutiny and indeed earlier too. After leaving the Navy, he went into journalism and joined the *Free Press Journal* in Bombay for some years before getting into the glamorous profession of advertising. When the author interviewed him 37 years later, he was Manager, General Administration of a leading advertising concern in Bombay. He appeared to epitomise the transformation from a ‘radical of radicals’ to a fashionable idealist wishing to plunge into some ‘constructive activity’ for society on his impending retirement from his present profession! Undoubtedly a patriot, he was no longer cast in the fiery and fervent mould of February 1946 and, indeed, now appeared to be an urbane, practical individual not wishing to let the good things of life slip by.

He painted slogans²⁹ like ‘Jai Hind’ and ‘Quit India’, on the platform from which the Commander-in-Chief, India was to take the salute in *HMIS Talwar* on February 2, 1946, was found out and taken into custody. He was in custody at the time of the outbreak of the mutiny and felt that he was a hero even when under detention. It is mentioned in the report of the Board of Enquiry, which was called upon to investigate into this incident in which Dutt was involved, that when Dutt’s papers were examined, his records

were found to be excellent. Indeed, Commander King, his Commanding Officer, has stated that, "He (Dutt) was a misguided, honest and good man who had been led astray by some revolutionary organisation and if officers had been able to give him more of their time and told him the other side of the story, he would have proved an excellent rating and a credit to any Navy."

Dutt has written a book entitled *Mutiny of the Innocents*—a well-brought-out book in the preparation and bringing out of which considerable work has been put in by him and perhaps some of his friends in the civvy street of the same hue, it presents his point of view—in some respects, however, not in an unconvincing way. There is a liberal dose of rhetoric to justify his aims and what he did, and how the mutiny was the penultimate/ultimate nail in the coffin of the foreign rulers and the final 'let down' of the mutineers by the ageing political leaders from whom they had sought advice and guidance—hence the title—the mutineers who, he thought, were politically innocent!

In this book, examples are legion of the discrimination suffered by Indian ratings at the hands of the Europeans and also the ill-treatment which was inflicted on them. He says, "We found ourselves working alongside white servicemen from the Army. In the Indian Army, British servicemen received preferential treatment. Whether at base or in a combat zone, they had better accommodation, better amenities. They were paid five to ten times more for the same jobs that Indian servicemen did. They travelled more comfortably. They could, if they wished, use Indian servicemen's canteens, mess rooms and baths, but the Indians had no access to theirs. The British servicemen were not required to salute Viceroy's Commissioned Officers. The discrimination was crude and was calculated to make the Indians feel inferior to the British. We, from the RIN did not suffer from an inferiority complex because, rank for rank, our performance was as good as, if not better than, that of the British rating. Officially too, in the RIN, unlike in the Indian Army, we were supposed to get equal treatment with the men of the Royal Navy. The British ratings received better pay and enjoyed more amenities but that did not trouble us much as we seldom served together on board the same ship or establishment. It was when we had to work with the Army personnel that we felt humiliated at every turn."

Dutt refers to a Beach Signal Unit outside Greater Bombay where a vast training camp was located under Army administration at that time. There were facilities for training over 10,000 men in that camp. He says, "The caste system practised in the camp was merely an extension of the system long established by the Raj in its administrative set-up and its whole existence in India. Besides the gradation of ranks into officers and Other Ranks, the camp was broadly divided into two pairs; the British and other white personnel called the B.O.R., the privileged section, the Brahmins; the Indian Army personnel and RIN ratings known as I.O.R. (Indian Other Ranks), the under-privileged, the untouchables."³⁰

He refers to this division being an open one and says that no effort was

made to conceal this fact. According to him, "I.O.R. barracks in the camp compared well with the pigsties kept by the villagers outside the camp area. The I.O.R. canteen did not cater even to our basic minimum needs." As he says, the life of the British personnel appeared "as an affront to our dignities." At another point he says, "We received the same training for the same task. We just could not understand the reason for this kind of discrimination. We resented the superior airs of the B.O.Rs. We despised the foul language they used while speaking to Indians. But we could do nothing about it. It was a system, well-established and accepted by the men of the Indian Army. They did not complain. By and large they were an uncomplaining lot, anyway. . . . Also, they had inherited more than a century-old tradition of loyalty and obedience and they were a part of it."

Dutt relates an incident of meeting Colonel Cariappa (later the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army). He was staying in the Officers' Mess a couple of miles away from the barracks where the RIN ratings were billeted. When it was conveyed to Colonel Cariappa that Dutt and his companions did not understand the reason for the discrimination between the I.O.Rs. and B.O.Rs. or for that matter, these different nomenclatures, his message to them was very significant. Colonel Cariappa, told them "we were the chosen few communication ratings from the whole of the RIN and that we could talk to the B.O.R. in his own language. Instead of being frustrated and bitter, we must try to match him with our performance. It would do us good and, what was more important, it would do the country a great service at the end of hostilities. He assured us that it would be a different world at the end of hostilities."

Dutt also refers to two British officers who were given the responsibility of raising the Beach Signal Unit from the RIN. This would form part of the invasion army which was being trained in different parts of India in 1943-44. The senior of the two British officers was Lieutenant F.M. Yarker. Dutt says, "We developed a great respect for his (Yarker) human qualities. He was tough, generous, kind-hearted and without a trace of colour prejudice. He put us through the training, sharing hardships equally with us. He marched in step with us, mile after rugged mile, in the hills of coastal Maharashtra, with full equipment on his back. He never used the jeep allotted to him during the operational exercises if he could not provide transport also for us (and never put us through any strenuous exercise in which he did not bear the hardships himself). He went out of his way to provide us with a few of the amenities the B.O.Rs. enjoyed.

"At the end of our training, we were transferred to a Royal Navy camp situated at Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, to await the invasion date. We expected equal treatment in living quarters and other amenities as the establishment was run by the Royal Navy. But to our surprise, we were given the same old treatment. Lieutenant Yarker shared our resentment. He told the Commanding Officer of the camp, Commander Seymour-Heydon, that his signal unit was as good as any British unit. He had English-speaking

men under him. Also, they were from the Navy where there were no double standards. Lieutenant Yarker managed to get us the same living quarters as the Royal Navy. He paid for it in the end We stayed in that camp for nearly two months. Yarker made it possible for us to meet the British signal sections on their own ground. We beat them in route march from Bandra to Kalyan. We beat them in boxing. We beat their individual teams as well as their combined team in hockey. And we did as well as they did in establishing wireless communications in landing exercises carried out along the coast lines at the height of the Bombay monsoon. Yarker was proud of us.

“Then the blow struck. We were put on alert for movement. That meant that no one was allowed to leave the camp. Yarker was absent when we left the camp. We did not know what had happened to him. He just disappeared. We might have been wrong but the only inference that we could draw was that he was removed as he was suspected to be too pro-Indian. In fact some of us had heard the British Servicemen refer to Yarker as ‘Pat-the-Wog-Lover’.

“We went to the front led by two young inexperienced officers, an Armenian from Calcutta, Ivan Aratoon, and an Indian Christian from Madras, Jesudasan. We came to like them eventually but they could never stand up to the British officers.” Dutt gives numerous other instances of his experience and knowledge of the racial discrimination and ill-treatment of Indian personnel. This made him and many others more and more embittered.

After the mutiny had started, the ratings had formed a “Naval Central Strike Committee to co-ordinate and direct the activities of the various units outside *HMIS Talwar*.” Leading Signalman M.S. Khan, a Muslim from Upper Punjab, now in Pakistan, and Petty Officer Telegraphist Madan Singh, a tall, lean Sikh, were unanimously elected President and Vice-President respectively. Both were under 25 and spoke English, Hindustani and Punjabi fluently. And, as Dutt says, both were free of the communal virus that had infected Indian public life at the time.

It has not been possible to locate M.S. Khan and it has been said by some that he was absorbed in the RPN after its formation in August 1947. Dutt is unable to corroborate this and it is not possible to verify at this stage. Madan Singh, lives in Eire and he visited New Delhi recently. He is about 60 years old and an engineer. When contacted to record his reminiscences of the period, he commented on the relationship between Indian and British personnel: “Relationship between the Indian and British officers was guarded except in a few instances. There were, indeed, some good British officers and, I would say, Commodore Rattray himself was one amongst them. The finest of our Indian officers, I remember, was the then Lieutenant S.N. Kohli—brave to state his mind clearly and without favour or fear and efficient in his work. There were indeed some other Indian officers like Lieutenant Kumaria, RINR, Lieutenants R.P. Nayyar, RINVR and Dhurinder, RINR meeting the same qualities though not on exact match with

Kohli. No one could stand up to a British officer in a dignified manner as Kohli. Relations between British officers and Indian ratings were very poor except in a few instances. Relations between Indian officers and British ratings on the surface looked cordial, the Indian officers, especially those from RINVR, being mostly on the serving end to please the British ratings. Relations between the Indian officers and Indian ratings were better by a marked degree than between the British officers and Indian ratings, but Indian officers too often seemed to be unable to redress a grievance if one was voiced to them, because in most cases it meant a decision from a British officer.

“Salary discrimination between the British and Indian ratings was wide. British ratings enjoyed far better salaries and amenities than the Indian ratings did. Service conditions, although the same on paper, differed in their applicability. It would be difficult for me to provide a clear picture for British ratings on their sea-shore service but, from what was learnt from hearsay, the British rating did get a fairer deal than the Indian. For the Indian rating, my own experience and observation of others points to a one-way traffic, namely—once on active service always on active service, and once on shore job always on shore job.

“The Anglo-Indians did enjoy an unwritten special privilege. They could get time off from a ship over an evening if mother or father phoned for it. In matters of punishment, they were dealt with far more leniently than the Indians.”³¹

It was Madan Singh's considered opinion that the causes of the mutiny were bad service conditions, in which bad food took the first place. Intolerable and insulting language used by some British officers who seemed to get more brazen by the day was another important factor. He states, “Whereas everything seemed to go reasonably well at *HMIS Talwar* at the time of its inception, racial discrimination became evident in the years following. . . . Anglo-Indians got the most of everything and to a small degree, even the Christians seemed to be favoured. I overheard a Muslim instructor (a known Muslim Leaguer) talking to another Muslim rating and saying that as far as he was concerned, he would confine promotions to Muslims. I would, however, regard this as an isolated case because it would insult the memory of others who were not infected by the communal virus.”³² Madan Singh says that the British officers' contact with men remained largely confined to the Anglo-Indian community. Captain Nott was, in Madan Singh's estimation, the most fair and yet the hardest taskmaster and he used to issue his orders invariably in writing—the only British officer who took the punishment upon himself if orders were wrong. Other officers far too often made scapegoats of the Indians, when orders were verbally given. Whereas Indian officers were more responsive and sympathetic, because they did not command, they were helpless.

M.S.I. Swamy³³ was enrolled in the RIN in March 1941 as an Acting Writer and rose to the rank of Commander before his retirement. He reminisces about his experience on arrival in England in November 1942 as a

member of the advance party for manning the sloop *HMIS Narbada*. "We arrived in England in November 1942 and were sent to Stamshaw Camp, Portsmouth. En route, in London there was an ugly incident. The compartment reserved for us was marked in chalk 'Blackies'. Our Officer-in-Charge, Lieutenant Commander Beeton disapproved of such an attitude and the writing was erased before we entrained."

C. Narayanan who joined as a probationary Store Assistant during the early part of the War and rose to the rank of Commander before retirement and was serving in *HMIS Feroze* (the Officers' Training Establishment) during the mutiny says of the establishment in which he was serving: "*HMIS Feroze* had the appearance and atmosphere of an exclusive club or gymkhana. It was officered mainly by superannuated arthritic Englishmen in Naval uniform who, in the wartime upsurge of patriotism, were washed ashore in this port city on the Arabian sea. They were ably assisted by few indigenous box-wallahs, who had been rewarded for their unmistakable loyalty to the Crown by 'limiting' their promotion to the high rank of Lieutenant Commander. These officers were on the 'staff'; they lorded it over the young native recipients of the King's Commission while putting them through their paces during training to become good model Sahibs. Both the 'Staff' and trainee officers detested each other; they united only in keeping us, the flunkies, in our places befitting the lowest of the low. *HMIS Feroze* must have then had approximately two hundred of these imported and indigenous Sahibs, flitting in and out, making their impact on Malabar Hill."³⁴

Jack Gibson, a British national and a renowned educationist who served in such august academic and military training institutions as the Doon School, Mayo College and the National Defence Academy for three decades and has now settled down in India, also did a short stint in the Royal Indian Navy as an RINVR officer during World War II. In his reminiscences recorded in 'As I Saw It', on October 26, 1944, he does not mince words in describing the state of affairs that prevailed in *HMIS Feroze*, the RIN training establishment for officers during the War.³⁵ "I have left *Feroze* for which I am thankful. Although I liked the C.O., the morale of the place was all wrong. The Chief Steward and the Mess Secretary, an English officer, were both making a lot of money. I tried to persuade the Executive Officer that things were wrong, but he was either in it, too stupid to see it, or too lazy to care. I put in an official request to the C.O., for an enquiry into the conduct of the mess. For various reasons, loyalty to his Number One (his deputy), etc., he didn't want this. Eventually I asked him to forward my request to the Flag Officer, Bombay. It was all most unpleasant as most of the senior officers wanted it hushed up. Any argument was good enough: What can you prove? You are not going to kill any Japanese by this. It happens all over the East, and you can't stop it. You've a grudge and are an interfering b., and so on. Unfortunately the Flag Officer, Bombay was on leave when my request went in and it was not taken up, but I feel that an enquiry could only have done good. It would have put an end to the

general dissatisfaction that did so much harm to morale. Corruption and nepotism is too prevalent in India, and it seems to me essential that British officers should not be involved, and if they are, should be disgraced. The Mess Secretary and Chief Steward were transferred, but only to practise elsewhere as opportunity offers."

Gibson's reminiscences confirm the calibre of many British personnel that were inducted into the RIN and held positions of authority which quite obviously they did not deserve but made full use of.

Racial discrimination with the attendant ill-treatment of Indian Naval personnel was manifested in various ways and to various degrees in most ships and establishments. The 'brightest jewel of the British Crown' was infested with these maladies both in the civil and military administration at all levels. It could be termed as a 'natural' facet of the ruler-ruled relationship. The Commission of Enquiry, unhesitatingly concludes: "The feeling of racial bitterness thus aroused among the Indian ratings and officers is one of the deadliest poisons which has corrupted the Service and its volume is so great that that alone might have caused a mutiny. It certainly contributed very largely to giving an anti-British trend to the mutiny."³⁶

Defects in administration and its bearing on the mutiny

Commenting on the state of administration at the time, the RIN Commission of Enquiry records "it cannot be gainsaid that if those who are at the helm of the affairs of any Department of State, particularly one dealing with an Armed Force, do not administer it in an efficient manner and allow grievances of the personnel of the Service to accumulate without giving redress or devising means of remedying them for a considerable time and as a result, discontent grows in the Service and eventually results in an outbreak, then the responsibility for the result must be shared by those who were entrusted with the administration of that Department of State."³⁷

In addition, a Senior Officer of the RIN nearly forty years ago said that one of the fundamental reasons for the prevailing discontent throughout the Service was: "Complete lack of confidence existing generally throughout the Service in Naval Headquarters and RIN Office, Bombay."

The officer developed on this further in his Memorandum to the Commission of Enquiry "With regard to Naval Headquarters, it would seem that a colossus has been built up which has got completely out of control. In fact, the machine has taken charge. I am sure I am speaking for the majority of the Service when I state that we are filled with a sense of frustration, dejection, despondency, if not disgust. The simplest matter literally takes months before a reply can be obtained, while staff work appears at a premium."³⁸

Other officers have stated that neither their men nor they themselves had any confidence in Naval Headquarters and the general opinion was that the Headquarters were out of touch with the conditions in ships and establishments. In answering letters, even on immediate and urgent matters,

there were enormous delays. Generally, letters went unanswered or at best acknowledged with a mere assurance that "the matter was under consideration". Orders were issued which, to the person on the spot, however loyal, bore no indication that the true conditions were appreciated. The rapid growth of the staff at Delhi and the rapidity with which its members received promotion with no corresponding quickening in the announcement of the decisions on the immediate questions raised, also provoked serious criticism.

Another officer has stated that after carefully considering the whole situation,³⁹ it was his firm conviction that the administration fell far short of the high standard of ability required for the control of a young and greatly expanding service and it had not shown itself at all capable of rising to the tasks expected.

The then Flag Officer, Bombay, Rear Admiral A.R. Rattray and a number of officers connected with the Bombay Establishments also blamed NHQ in many ways. Naval Headquarters, on the other hand, blamed the Military Finance Department which retaliated by blaming NHQ. Rear Admiral Rattray, while referring to the lack of confidence in NHQ, the domination of the War Department and the complete control exercised by the Military Finance Department, has recorded:

"The result of the system is that officers at Naval Headquarters have often despaired of ever getting a case accepted almost before it is started. As one officer has very truly said, 'I have spent more time in this war in fighting the Military Finance Branch than I have the Japanese or the Germans. In nearly every case, the proposal has been finally accepted but at what cost of time and effort.'"

Many officers refrained from putting up proposals being certain that there was no possibility of their acceptance within a reasonable time. A 'couldn't care less' attitude appeared to permeate throughout the administration and this feeling even extended to the ratings. The men, in the first place, thought that their officers did not agree with them. Next they believed that they were powerless, and finally, that the officers did not care. This led to a feeling that reforms could seldom be achieved by normal service methods!

The Commission of Enquiry has clearly recorded that "there is no gain-saying the fact that the system of administration of Service has been a major contributory factor to the present state of discipline in the Service—a state which has unfortunately culminated in the mutiny." The gravest lapse of the administration, as brought out by the Commission of Enquiry, however, was that it remained ignorant of the serious discontent which had been prevailing for several years. It had failed to gauge the depth of discontent and did not allow its attitude of complacency, which was quite apparent in the morale reports, to be disturbed by the feeling that anything was wrong with the Navy.

Recruitment promises and discontent

Vice Admiral Godfrey, in his report on the causes of the Mutiny, said, "The average rating firmly believed that he was going to be found a post-War job by the Service. Government and the Navy cannot be held blameless for this. Much of the recruitment advertising was literally on the lines of 'Join the Navy and ensure yourself a post-War job.' Admittedly, in the texts of the advertisement, no specific promise was made but the caption definitely implied that this would be the case. We stopped it later in the war but the damage was done."⁴⁰

Rear Admiral Rattray, in his report on the same subject, said, "To many ratings the end of the War brought alluring prospects of return to civil life on a high scale of pay. This state of mind has been largely engendered by war-time recruiting propoganda on the theme of 'Join the Navy and learn a job for after the war.'"⁴¹

Commodore John Lawrence, who was Staff Officer Operations at Naval Headquarters from 1939 to the end of 1941 and later rose to be the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, Royal Indian Navy, said that recruiting posters, pamphlets and booklets contained promises and tried to encourage people but they were not quite as they should have been. Commodore Jefford, who later became Commander-in-Chief, Royal Pakistan Navy in August 1947, referred to the misrepresentation by recruiting officers and said, "From my own experience I should say that through ignorance in many cases recruits have been recruited with false promises; sometimes, it is the ignorance of recruits, sometimes of the recruiter and sometimes the recruit does not understand what he has been told."

Commander S.S. Gill of the Royal Indian Naval Reserve, at that time the Commanding Officer of *HMIS Cheetah*, said, "The rating was strongly of the opinion that he had been let down by the Recruiting Officer who recruited him. He was assured at the time of recruitment that he would get rapid promotion in the Royal Indian Navy, that on release he would be guaranteed a job or, failing that, adequate subsistence allowance, whereas he now saw, from the experience of those released already, that no such facility is being provided by Government and that they are being just left in the streets."⁴¹

In the Morale Report issued by Naval Headquarters for the quarter ending December 31, 1945, the following passage occurs: "Complaints by men who state that they had been recruited by false promises are still prevalent. They argue that they were taken into the Navy with all sorts of tempting promises and now they are sent out of the Service without any adequate provision for employment in civil life." Complaints about false promises are also referred to in the Morale Reports of Commanding Officers of various ships and establishments for earlier quarters.

Lieutenant Commander E. Micheal Shaw, Royal Indian Navy, who was the Commanding Officer of *HMIS Talwar* from January 28, 1945 to September 29, 1945 has observed: "By all accounts, recruits were told glowing

tales of life in the Navy by recruiting officers and the service life has consequently been a great shock. This has led to there being men in the Service who have been discontented from the day they joined. To my personal knowledge, in 1945, several gentlemen applied for commissions who at the time of their application were drawing a salary of Rs. 70 per month. It is considered reasonable to assume that the pay for a Sub-Lieutenant of Rs. 450 proved an attraction.”⁴² He further adds that “the unfulfilled promises made by Recruiting Officers about employment and release” were among the many things which caused dissatisfaction.

In the opinion of Lieutenant S.N. Kohli, “in spite of the fact that many promises were made by the recruiting authorities about the post-War settlement of ratings when they joined, the actual number of jobs which the ratings can be offered or will get was extremely few with the result that the rating is sadly disillusioned and bears malice and bitterness towards the Service.”⁴³

Lieutenant Commander A.K. Chatterji (later Admiral and Chief of the Naval Staff, 1966-70) said that “the ratings had three genuine grievances. The first was that they were recruited as Communication ratings and were expected to work as Seamen on deck. Communication ratings are usually of the matriculation standard and start on pay of Rs. 60 per month as opposed to Rs. 40 per month for the Seamen ratings who are naturally of a lower educational standard.”

Commander P.M. Verghese who had joined the RIN as a Boy in 1940, relates his experience in the service,⁴⁴ “I joined the Navy on 29th November, 1940 in the ‘lowest form of humanity’ (a wrong phrase to use, but you know what I mean—a Boy). The Boys of ‘D’ batch recruited at various centres in South India early in November 1940 were asked to muster at Pune from where onwards we had a guided journey. At railway stations, we were fed in typical naval aluminium plates like refugees in the middle of platforms for the amusement of the train passengers and railway staff. Big crowds surrounded us for a free show. This was the first time a recruiting party toured South India. The Officer-in-Charge was Lieutenant Soman, later to become the Chief of the Naval Staff.

“At Karachi we were given food we were never accustomed to, dry bread with dry dal in the morning, rice with one curry at noon and chapati with one curry at night. There was a free supply of milk for the Boys. Our batch of Boys was supposed to be the ‘educated and civilised’ batch.

“Early in 1941, English and Indian rations were introduced. There was no vegetarian rations. Except for a few Punjabi recruits, all others opted for ‘English’ rations. But we regretted this option on ships where English rations were limited to white polished rice and beef curry cooked in the officer’s galley (kitchen). We were not entitled to the pleasure of eating Indian curry, chapati, etc. The Indian ration cooks refused to supply some curry because we ‘*Goreka bachcha ban gaya.*’

“Food in general was of low quality. We were not entitled to good quality

vegetables, like tomato, cabbage and carrots. Chicken and eggs appeared on officers' menus only. Ratings never had a menu or any variety in food. Only poorest quality rice, garnished with stone chips and mud pieces, was supplied.

"The rating's uniform was made of cheap and coarse material. The winter garments were rough woollen stuff, which we were ashamed of wearing because they appeared to have been made out of blankets. It was nick-named 'Pereira' because the Supply Officer in charge of clothing was a Commissioned Stores Officer by that name.

"No facilities existed for married ratings. They were not supposed to bring their families to the duty station. If they did, it was their own business. No night leave, no MLR (money in lieu of rations), no married accommodation, no CILQ (cash in lieu of quarters), no educational allowance, no medical assistance to the family members and no week-ends—both long and short. The present facilities came much, much later.

"We never heard of 'welfare' or 'Welfare Fund' in the good old days.

"As Boys under training, our pay was a princely sum of Rs. 15 per month; Seagoing Boy received Rs. 25."

A booklet entitled *The Navy and its Job*⁴⁵ begins by saying, "The Royal Indian Navy is moulded on the lines of the Royal Navy because, without exception, the Royal Navy is the oldest, the most efficient and the finest fighting service in the world." This passage occurs in many other booklets and it is no matter for surprise that ratings generally relied on it for their demands for better pay, promotion, treatment and amenities. It proceeds to say, "India's Navy is growing fast. It needs to grow faster if security is to be ensured. The Navy needs men of intelligence and singleness of purpose who, united, will man India's warships and protect India's seaborne trade against the attacks of aggressors."

On April 28, 1945, the Flag Officer, Bombay sent a detailed report to the Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy, covering the misleading statements in all recruiting pamphlets regarding prospects of advancement and said that it was evident that far too many ratings had been misinformed on recruitment regarding terms and conditions of service particularly as to status and chance of promotion.

In trying to understand the feelings of discontent and frustrated hopes in the minds of the ratings in the RIN, the Commission draws attention to a few facts of public knowledge at that time. Soon after the War began and during its duration, the Government encountered the opposition or apathy of certain leading political parties in the country and large sections of people who sympathised with them. The Government,⁴⁶ therefore, found it necessary to organise intensive propaganda for war effort of which recruitment was an outstanding success and had brought large numbers into the fighting service. But this success was largely due to the propaganda carried on by officers of all ranks and by non-officials of influence. In the course of such propaganda, people were undoubtedly given to believe that the men thus recruited would

partake of the fruits of victory and the Government would take care of them, their families and their future. Therefore, it was not on the promises of recruiting officers alone that the hopes of the enlisted men were built. It is important to remember this fact, as some naval officers appear to dismiss the claims of ratings as due to the mistakes or carelessness of certain ill-informed recruiting officers. Post-War schemes for the employment and settlement of demobilised soldiers and ratings were also given great publicity. It is admitted by naval authorities that these schemes had not materialised in any appreciable measure.

The Commission clearly records: "It establishes beyond doubt the validity of the complaints of ratings that at the time of recruitment they were misled on various matters vitally affecting their life and career. They enlisted on the faith not merely of vague and general words of praise of the Royal Indian Navy but of specific representations about pay, prospects of promotion and a fine career in an expanding Navy with a bright future, leave, amenities, etc. Soon after their entry into the Naval Service, some ratings were disillusioned and disappointed in certain matters such as cleanliness duties, messing and food arrangements. But these disappointments were confined to particular sections of ratings or localities. They were, however, so keenly felt that they resulted in mutinies in certain establishments. But dissatisfaction on matters such as pay, promotion and prospects was more general and widespread. All the same, the Commanding Officers of Ships and Establishments usually reported till the middle of 1945 that the morale of the ratings was high. It was only after the turn of the second half of 1945 that we get disquieting reports about the temper and state of mind of the ratings generally. There is a progressive decline of morale during the second half of 1945 and beginning of 1946.

"Such a decline is to be expected in any service when a war is over but in the case of the Royal Indian Navy there was amongst other reasons the grievance over recruiting promises. The demobilisation of large numbers of men and officers after the war coupled with the failure of resettlement schemes to provide them with post-war jobs and employment which they had been led to expect appear to have added considerably to the feeling of disappointment and frustration due to unfulfilled promises about pay, prospects and conditions of service in the Royal Indian Navy. That this state of discontent in the Royal Indian Navy was one of the main causes of the mutiny has been generally admitted and is beyond doubt."

Viceroy's appreciation

In a despatch dated March 22, 1946 to King George VI, Lord Wavell then Viceroy of India, had the following to say: "The last three months have been anxious and depressing. They have been marked by continuous and unbridled abuse of the Government, of the British, of officials and police, in political speeches, in practically the whole of the Press, and in the Assembly; by serious rioting in Bombay; by a mutiny in the RIN, much indiscipline in

the RIAF, some unrest in the Indian Army; by an unprecedented drought and famine conditions over many parts of India; by threatened strikes on the Railways, and in the Post and Telegraphs; by a general sense of insecurity and lawlessness. It is a sorry tale of misfortune and of folly. Perhaps the best way to look at it is that India is in the birth-pangs of a new order; that birth-pangs are never pleasant and often dangerous; and that the crude methods of Indian midwives are notorious but not always fatal. . . .

“The RIN mutinies came on us with practically no warning. How far the men had any real grievances will be shown by a Commission of Enquiry. The RIN has expanded so rapidly during the war that it is very short of experienced officers and petty officers; and it has not the background and traditions of the Indian Army. But that the expression of any grievances there were took the form it did was undoubtedly due to instigation by political agitators, Communist and Left-Wing Congress. The riots in Bombay which accompanied the mutiny were simply due to the dangerous mobs which are always ready in any Indian city to seize the opportunity for burning and looting; they have of course been encouraged by the violent speaking of the last six months. A very ugly situation was extremely well handled by the police and military.

“The example of the RAF and their so-called ‘strike’ had undoubtedly some responsibility both for the RIN mutiny and for the present state of the RIAF, who can only be described as sullen and unstable for the most part. Here again is a lack of background due to rapid expansion, and also some political agitation.

“The most disturbing feature of all is that unrest is beginning to appear in some units of the Indian Army; so far almost entirely in the technical arms. Auchinleck thinks that the great mass of the Indian Army is still sound, and I believe that this is so. It may not take long, however, to shake their steadiness if the Congress and Muslim League determine to use the whole power of propaganda at their command to do so.”⁴⁷

Political fallout

Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali was a young Congress Socialist in the forties and was very active on the national scene in 1946 at the time of the RIN mutiny. When asked thirty-six years later about her reaction to the Mutiny and whether she had any earlier information about discontent of any kind in the Navy, Army or Air Force and also whether she was approached by Naval personnel for any advice, she said: “Firstly, I would like to say that we did not agree with the British authorities that the uprising was a ‘mutiny’ in the strict sense of the term. The RIN ratings’ strike was a ‘strike’ in as much as it was a protest against their unsatisfactory conditions of work, the outrageous racial discrimination practised by the British officers against Indians and humiliation heaped upon them. Actually, the RIAF airmen’s strike merely accelerated the RIN reaction because discontent was simmering in all wings of the Armed Forces. The 1942 ‘Open rebellion’ against British rule had, by and large,

aroused, as never before, the sense of patriotism of Indians serving in the British Army, Navy and Air Force. Till then, they felt they were no more than mercenaries. Now, they felt like patriots. My personal 'reaction' was naturally one of elation because I felt that if the British offer of freedom proved to be a hoax, the RIAF and RIN protest actions were an indication that if negotiations with the Cabinet Mission would end in failure, the next phase of India's struggle for freedom would be final, and colonial rule would be buried once and for all.

"We were all part of the Congress. Every segment of the Indian National Congress, ranging from the conservative to the most radical, accepted, generally speaking, the concept of egalitarianism. But the socialist elements within the Congress in that period were committed to organising active resistance by the workers, peasants and other exploited classes in our society. We were less prone to accept what we perceived as compromises that ultimately led to surrender. Therefore, we believed in calling upon the working people to form trade unions and peasant unions all over the country. Throughout the national struggle from 1932 to 1948 and later, we used to often meet individuals from among the class conscious elements in the Service and encouraged them to fight against discrimination wherever and whenever possible.

"When the open rebellion which broke out soon after the arrest of our national leaders on August 9, 1942 subsided on the surface, units of our underground organisation in several parts of the country were contacted by individuals in the British Armed Forces—secretly of course—under assumed names. Again I repeat here it was not just a question of 'discrimination' against service rules, etc., but they were angry men, who felt that Britain's colonial rulers had dared to swoop down on their national leaders at every level, arrested them and had unleashed violence (in Gandhiji's words 'leonine violence') on masses of unarmed men and women for the 'sin' of demanding freedom and independence of their motherland. They came to us for advice about their desire to take part in patriotic activities.

"Our advice to them was to organise, to begin with, such elements of their units as are truly patriotic and prepared to 'do or die' according to Gandhiji's mandate. We interpreted this, now controversial, command to mean that wherever you are, you 'do' your best to hamper the British war machine without causing individual injury unless forced to do so. We warned them that if their activities were detected by the British authorities, they should be prepared to pay the highest price—physical torture and even the gallows. We asked them to be careful and act only when they were sure that it would have the character of a 'collective' action. We cautioned them that they could be betrayed by their own cowardly colleagues and that they should be prepared for such treacherous actions, etc. We did advise them to avoid killing of individual British officers as that might give them an alibi for inflicting furious reprisals. In any case, they were told to spread the message of the 'Quit India' resolution from unit to unit and then 'strike' on specific demands.

“All the leaders were almost unanimously of the view that the RIN strike should not have provoked the British commanders to behave as they did. Godfrey’s name became notorious because he had the audacity to threaten the destruction of the entire Navy. But by and large, all of them cautioned us against encouraging the strikers to take any extreme steps. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, in particular, believed that the British ‘offer’ of Independence was sincere about transferring power to India.

“Your questions persist in using the term ‘mutiny’ whereas throughout this period we defined it as strike action. The ratings were infuriated by the inhuman working conditions and, to add insult to injury, they were abused. To be called Indian dogs who should be treated as mad dogs hurt their patriotic sentiments. However, most political leaders including the tallest of them all, namely Gandhiji, called upon them to end their resistance. And Sardar Patel appealed to them to leave it to the national leaders to settle matters. To begin with, the ‘Quit India’ leaders appealed to Jawaharlal Nehru and others to bring about an honourable settlement and not insist that the strikers should surrender unconditionally. However, on its own, we finally did advise the strikers to follow the Congress leaders’ advice because the fact that we were not absolutely confident that ultimately, in the event of a deadlock of the Cabinet Mission’s negotiations, whether the 1942 leadership could continue the freedom struggle.

“I am not sure if I met any officers of the Indian Navy, but leaders of the strike movement, whose names I cannot remember now, did come to see me to seek my advice.

“The strikers had no other option. As for violence, it was the provocative action of the British authorities which sparked it and they had to resist it. The violence that you talk about occurred when the British Police and the Army resorted to firing on thousands of people who demonstrated in support of the strike.

“The strikers, more or less, knew about the consequences of their action or the nature of punishment that would be heaped upon them. But, because they knew that some form of National Government was coming to existence, they naturally wanted to get the support of some prominent political leaders. I do not think that they should have been dismissed from service. In my view they should have been reinstated by the National Government. At the most, some severe warnings should have been sufficient to meet the requirements of upholding administrative discipline.

“They fully deserve to get pensions for which other freedom fighters are eligible. As a matter of fact, quite a few of them did not even receive the regular pension they were entitled to.

“It was a proof that there was widespread unrest in the Armed Services under British rule. This protest action, therefore, could have influenced the members of the Cabinet Mission’s thinking about the transfer of power that took place in August 1947.

“Most nationalists of our times welcomed the Indian soldiers’ refusal to

fire on unarmed agitators. The Garhwali soldiers' refusal to do so in 1930 was a unique event which must have had its repercussions on some other sections of the Armed Forces. But the Gurkha soldiers' action in 1919 and, more so, the Maratha soldiers' behaviour was unpatriotic and gave an indication that they had been totally demoralised.

"Indian Army men, serving the British rule, were looked upon as mercenaries by the average Indian. To the people of my way of thinking, it was both illegal and immoral to call upon them to shoot down Indian patriots.

"Obviously there is a world of difference between a National Government elected by the people and one that was imposed by force of arms and other means by the foreigners as the British Government was.

"I believe that in our present situation, political parties who have taken the oath of allegiance to the Indian Constitution should not tamper with the loyalty and discipline of the Armed Forces.

"My views on this subject (violence as a means to achieve political aims) are no longer relevant. But in 1942 I certainly did think that since non-violence practised by most Congressmen since 1930, with hardly any impact on the British colonialists' attitude towards the demand for Swaraj; I, rightly or wrongly, came to the conclusion that non-violent action was not enough and, therefore, had to be supplemented by more effective actions which could be described as violent. Yes, I was aware of Gandhiji's disapproval of my encouragement to the RIN boys and at that point of time I openly disagreed with him.

"Despite this long span of time, that is 1946-1984, I have no reason to revise my views.

"Perhaps, the INA soldiers' acquittal, after their trial, might have influenced the RIN strikers. But they certainly expected and, rightly so, that they should have been treated as patriots and not as rebels. I personally think it is difficult to isolate the events which took place at that time and come to any conclusion about cause and effect of incidents, such as the Naval uprising or the INA's role. Finally, many of the grievances of the RIN ratings were not attended to satisfactorily by the National Government. Therefore, some of them think that I and my colleagues betrayed them in as far as we failed to get the grievances redressed."⁴⁸

Mahatma Gandhi had issued a statement on February 26 in reply to Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali's criticism of his attitude to the RIN mutiny. Amongst other things he said that "it is a matter of great relief that the ratings have listened to Sardar Patel's advice to surrender. They have not surrendered their honour. So far as I can see, in resorting to mutiny they were badly advised. If it was grievance, fancied or real, they should have waited for the guidance and intervention of political leaders of their choice.

"If they mutinied for the freedom of India, they were doubly wrong. They could not do so without a call from a prepared revolutionary party. They were thoughtless and ignorant if they believed that by their might they would deliver India from foreign domination.

“Aruna was right when she says that the fighters this time showed grit as never before. But grit becomes foolhardiness when it is untimely and suicidal as this was. She is entitled to say that the people ‘are not interested in the ethics of violence or non-violence,’ but the people are very much interested in knowing the way which will bring freedom to the masses—violence or non-violence. The people have, however imperfectly, hitherto gone the way of non-violence. Aruna and her comrades have to ask themselves everytime whether non-violence has or has not raised India from her slumber of ages and created in them a yearning, very vague perhaps, for Swaraj. There is, in my opinion, only one answer.”⁴⁹

Mr. M.R. Masani, another young Congress Socialist of the forties who was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly, has recorded the following on the RIN Mutiny in his book *Bliss Was It in That Dawn*:

“An exciting debate which took place on February 22, 1946, was that on an adjournment motion to discuss the mutiny of the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in Bombay. Our Deputy Leader, Asaf Ali, had tabled an adjournment motion to discuss ‘the grave situation that has arisen with respect to the Indian Navy, affecting practically the whole of it, as a result of mis-handling by the immediate authorities concerned.’

“In a speech on the occasion, I appealed to the British to leave the country while there was ‘still an army, navy and air force left in the country.’ We are told that the situation is in control and that prestige has been preserved no doubt with the co-operation of men like Sardar Patel in Bombay and Gazdar in Karachi. It has been preserved because our national leaders of all parties are prepared in the interest of this country to endorse the call of the authorities. I wonder whether this kind of victory is worth having. The ratings who surrendered in the interest of their country are the moral victors of the struggle.

“Surely, I continued, the British Government did not have to wait for another mutiny. They could go while there was still some social stability and law and order left. They needn’t pull down the pillars of society.

“The Defence Secretary, Philip Mason, whom I was to come to know later as the writer Philip Woodruff, told me in the lobby in a typically sporting manner. ‘That was a wicked speech, Masani, but I enjoyed it.’”⁵⁰

Thirty-six years later, Mr. Masani was interviewed on the same subject and he said:

“Now to see if there is anything I can say to supplement what I have already written. I imagine that the ratings were motivated partly by their own grievances like food, partly by poor leadership and partly by nationalistic motives.

“On the larger question on whether members of the armed forces have a right to rebel I was in agreement with my friend Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan when he called upon the armed forces to disobey ‘illegal’ orders of the Government, even though I personally warned him not to repeat the statement as it was difficult to say what orders were legal and what were illegal

and he was liable to be misquoted, which he was.

“My own thinking would be that the Polish Army would be perfectly entitled to mutiny and restore solidarity in Poland unless of course there again it would only result in inviting Soviet aggression. It is, therefore, a difficult and complicated question to answer.

“You refer to the then British Government as ‘a foreign regime lawfully established’. When was it lawfully established? Can any foreign regime claim to be lawfully established except when its military power is adequate to enforce its will? When I was a young rebel under Gandhiji during Independence days I used to question the words ‘Government by law established’. It does not mean that even then I was for violent action and I did say in my speech in the Indian Legislative Assembly that though the motives of the ratings may be patriotic I could not support their method of resorting to a mutiny. Similarly I do not think the police force have any right to strike or riot.

“I do not think that exploitation by political parties of discontent in the military and para-military forces for political benefit is justified. I entirely agree that such exploitation in the long run undermines discipline in these forces. I am against members of the police or the armed forces being allowed to join trade unions, etc.”⁵¹

Mr. Philip Mason of the Indian Civil Service and author of *A Matter of Honour*, concerning the Indian Army and many other books, who was the Defence (War) Secretary at that time and is mentioned by Mr. Masani, was requested to record his reminiscences of the period, particularly relating to the RIN Mutiny; he has the following to say:

“Nonetheless I do most vividly remember as a very dramatic moment the mutiny in February 1946 in the Royal Indian Navy when I was the representative of the Defence Department in the Central Assembly. You ask me in the first place three questions—do I consider that the RIN and RIAF mutinies were caused by nationalistic reasons, or some long outstanding unredressed grievances, or a mixture of both.

“The short answer must be a mixture of both but I think the general feeling of unrest was the most important. The kind of men recruited in the RIN, as in the Indian Army, were mostly from the Punjab or from the other classes who were recruited in the Indian Army and I think just the same kind of material. I have suggested in my book *A Matter of Honour* that whenever there was a mutiny in the Indian Army one could say there were three causes—a general feeling of unease or disquiet of political origin, some military grievance about food or dress or pay and finally strange, unknown, or bad officers. In the years leading up to the partition and independence there was widespread uncertainty about the political future, anxiety about affairs at home and the contrast between the prevailing mood in the village and what the men heard with their regiment. In the Indian Army there was a strong feeling of regimental pride and the tradition of the unit and so they were able to overcome these difficulties and the Indian Army as a whole remained faithful to their military allegiance until partition. It was a very surprising thing that the

Indian Army was kept out of political involvement in those years and a great triumph, I think for the officers and the regimental spirit.

“The Royal Indian Navy had expanded far more rapidly than the Army and in the nature of things had nothing like the same regimental spirit. I do not need to emphasise the point to you, but, in any Navy, men are made up into complements for each ship they join and the pride in the Navy as a whole must obviously be a matter of much slower growth than pride in a regiment. Certainly the officers of the RIN whom I knew and whom I think best qualified to express an opinion believed that too rapid expansion was at the bottom of the trouble. I don't think the local grievances were in this case really important; they could have been dealt with quickly enough with officers who really knew the men personally.

“Your second question is whether I consider it the inherent right of a member of the defence forces of a subject nation to rebel or mutiny. My answer to that is that it depends entirely on whether they have been conscripted or volunteered. If they have been conscripted (as in Russia in 1917) I suppose they have such a right, but the Indian Army and the Indian Navy in World War II had volunteered and the men had taken an oath of allegiance. In that case I most emphatically do not think they have such a right and I emphasised this strongly in the speeches I made in the Assembly about the Indian National Army. I said that I thought it was essential for the future of India as an independent nation that every one should clearly understand that a military oath by a volunteer was inviolable. The only exception to that is of course, as you will know, the general legal proviso that no one should obey an illegal order, such as to murder someone in cold blood without trial.

“Your third question is as to what is my conception of a legal and illegal order in relation to the defence forces. I am not of course a lawyer and I am sure you will find a great deal of legal writing on this subject. It seems to me that in a volunteer army the situation is usually, in practice, perfectly clear. A soldier or sailor has taken an oath of allegiance and he is bound to obey the orders of his superior officer. It is understood that these orders are all given within a military framework. That is to say, a man will legally be ordered to do certain things which fall within his military duty. His commanding officer will not order him to take off all his clothes in public; to remove his turban in public if he is a Sikh or to murder a comrade. He would be justified in refusing such an order—on the other hand such an order would not usually be given! So that in practice, I do not think there is usually any real difficulty.

“The question of a conscript army, of which the majority believe that the Government which conscripted them is tyrannous, is a much broader and bigger question and I do not suppose you will really want to go into that; it does not seem relevant to your point because these men were all volunteers.

“I do not know if you will be in sympathy with my point of view but I can explain it further. While I was in the Assembly in the beginning of 1946 there was on the Congress benches a lady from Bombay, whose name I am sorry

to say, in old age, has altogether escaped me, whose daughter had commanded a battalion of Indian women in Malaya who volunteered to join the Japanese and fight on their side against the British in India. At the end of the War this young lady was held as a prisoner-of-war in a camp in Burma. I remember telling my colleague in the Assembly, this young lady's mother, that I thought she should be released at once and I would endeavour to arrange this and I successfully did. She had a genuine belief that she was doing the right thing and had volunteered to fight against us and I can see no reason why she should be held indefinitely in prison. Her mother, my colleague in the Assembly, expressed her gratitude for what I had done and asked me to come and meet her for tea. I said I would be pleased to meet her and was looking forward to the occasion when she mentioned that one of the INA officers would be there. I then said that I was afraid I could not meet him and so the meeting never took place. The point was that the INA man had held a commission in the Indian Army, he had volunteered for this, he had been to the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun and he had held a commission from the King. He had changed sides in war when it was greatly to his advantage to do so. To me this is morally quite a different category from that of someone who had never taken any oath of allegiance."⁵²

Commander S.G. Karmarkar (later a Rear Admiral) who received orders to take over the command of *HMIS Talwar* the evening before the Mutiny says: "As a result of the mutiny the Communist Party of India in Bombay went completely berserk, stopped the textile mills from working and they started actively participating in arson and destruction in Bombay especially in the working class areas starting from Bhandi Bazar to Dadar."⁵³

He further says, "After the mutiny a delegation of politicians was brought to my house in *Reveira* by my dear friend Mr. Venkatrao Ogale of Ogale Glass Works. The delegation consisted of famous political personalities like Rao Saheb Patwardhan, his brother Janardhan Patwardhan and they were accompanied by Mr. Appa Pant who was also well known to me.

"They desired to know about the mutiny. They were completely briefed giving a correct picture. They were appreciative of action taken by me and my attitudes and enquired whether I would be prepared to meet Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. When informed I don't see any reason 'why not', they fixed an appointment for me with the future Prime Minister of India at Carmichael Road at his sister's residence (Mrs. Krishna Hathee Singh). At this time I was closely associated with a highly placed British Intelligence Officer from the centre. He requested if he could accompany me, I said most certainly. I also took with me Lieutenant S.N. Kohli who was reluctant at first but eventually he agreed.

"It was an interesting meeting. Salient features regarding the Mutiny were communicated to Mr. Nehru.

"As usual Mr. Nehru went off the track and started talking about youth, enthusiasm, aspirations etc. My colleague asked Mr. Nehru, would he support the youth if they go completely haywire in doing things like ruining a very fine,

extremely well-regulated service. This upset the old man and he got angry. I did not subdue him but I poured more oil in the fire! After another ten to fifteen minutes we had a nice cup of tea and departed.”

Lieutenant S.N. Kohli who was serving in *HMIS Talwar* at the time of the RIN Mutiny says “the mutiny started in *Talwar* firstly because the communication ratings were more educated and intelligent and secondly because the mutiny could spread throughout the Navy very rapidly as they could control all wireless and other means of communication and pass orders and information to all the Naval ships in all ports of India.

“It is my view that the Naval Mutiny coming as the culmination of a number of similar incidents in the Indian Defence Services was largely instrumental in convincing the British that holding India was no longer feasible without the use of large-scale British force and was, *inter alia*, responsible for ushering in freedom.

“I am reminded of an incident in which I was personally involved. Firstly, Lieutenant Commanders Katari and Karmarkar were either summoned or were going to see Pandit Nehru on his visit to Bombay then. They asked me to accompany them.

“After arrival at Mrs. Hathee Singh’s house, we waited for our turn. When we went Panditji said, ‘What can I do for you?’ I was taken aback because I thought he had sent for us. When my two companions did not say anything, I piped up ‘At no time has the Congress given the Armed Forces clear guidelines or a clear directive how to conduct themselves in the present politically disturbed conditions of the country.’ Panditji went red in the face and retorted, ‘thank you for teaching me my job.’ He was then, I think, Congress President. The Admirals then discussed the genesis of the mutiny.”⁵⁴

Shri Morarji Desai, a former Prime Minister of India, was a well-known leader on the national scene at that time and took over as the Home Minister of Bombay a couple of months after the RIN Mutiny in February 1946. He was interviewed with regard to his views on this subject. He was quite categorical and said⁵⁵ that whatever may have been the grievances they (the ratings) had no right to revolt irrespective of whether they were serving under a foreign power, as they were volunteers and not conscripts. He said that the mutiny should not have taken place and it was all wrong; the ratings should have resigned and taken recourse to all constitutional measures. They cannot do what they did in the defence forces and police forces. No Army or country can function like this and in fact it would be disastrous. In the case of conscription, however, it is a totally different thing. Shri Desai said that he agreed with Sardar Patel’s advice to the ratings to lay down their arms and then he would help them to have their grievances redressed.

With regard to his views regarding freedom fighters’ pensions, for ratings who took part in the mutiny, he was emphatic that they are not entitled to any such pension and that he was against all these things. He said he was against the ratings being taken back into the service after they had mutinied.

He did not agree with the claim of the ratings that their action hastened the freedom of the country. He emphasised that he did not believe in any pension being given to all freedom fighters and specifically raised the question "does one fight for freedom to get pension?" He was also against the exploitation by political parties of any discontent in military and paramilitary forces for deriving any political benefits. He was also of the view that the Indian National Army were not the harbingers of independence and it was Mahatma Gandhi who brought independence for the country. He was of the view that the Labour Party, being in power in Great Britain at that time, helped and they had also realised that it was not possible for the British to hold on to India any longer.

Referring back to B.C. Dutt, he has an interesting piece in his book *Mutiny of the Innocents*. He says, "If there ever was a revolutionary situation in India it was there in the mid-forties. The mushroom cloud of smoke over the two Japanese cities had buried under its fall-out much that man had cherished. Along with it went the prevalent notions of imperial glory. In India a new generation had grown by wearing the soldier's uniform and exulting in the sound of gunfire. Most of them wanted the total overthrow of the Raj. The means did not much matter. Nor were they, at that point in Indian history, the only ones to feel the way they did. Other segments of society were also similarly inclined. The leadership would not have it. They nipped what the young thought was the revolution in the bud.

"There were reasons for such an attitude. The Mahatma, of course, was dead-set against violence, whatever the cause. But his followers were a tired lot in a hurry for freedom during their life-time at any price. It is true that the Mahatma wanted to give the British another chance to prove their bona fides. If they failed, the Mahatma intended to rally the country for another battle. He did not get that chance. He had to accept the partition of the country, because his lieutenants did not give him any other choice. For once, and at the most crucial and heart-breaking of times, everything went against him. The leaders were a tired lot, veterans of many battles, now turned old and impatient. It was natural; they were only being human; above all, characteristically Indian. Their actions were in total accord with the national character."⁵⁶

Strike or mutiny

Member of RIN Mutiny Commission of Enquiry consisting of three Indian Chief Justices, a Vice Admiral of the Royal Navy Commanding the Cruiser Squadron in the East Indies and a British Major General of the Indian Army who had commanded the famous 4th Indian Division have unambiguously recorded in their concluding paragraphs of the report on July 10, 1946, "We feel strongly that it must be brought home to the men of the Royal Indian Navy and indeed to all Armed Forces, that there is not and never can be, such a thing as a 'strike' in any Armed Force; it can only be mutiny with or without violence.

“Discipline is essential and discipline calls for a spirit of loyalty, unselfishness and devotion to duty on the part of both officers and men, each having his responsibilities, to each other and to the Service.”⁵⁷

Recognition of freedom fighters

In 1972, the Government of India addressed the Chief Secretaries of State Governments and Union Territories stating that ex-personnel of the Royal Indian Navy who had participated in the RIN mutiny would also be considered for the grant of freedom fighters pension. The conditions stipulated for the grant of freedom fighters pension was that “only those who lost their jobs or means of livelihood due to participation in the national movement would be brought under this scheme.” A list of 457 sailors of the RIN who were discharged/dismissed/released from service as a result of the RIN Mutiny was prepared and subsequently 19 more sailors were added to this list making a total of 476. It was decided that only those sailors who were either “dismissed from the service” or “discharged SNLR” (Service no longer required) should be eligible for the grant of freedom fighters pension. This decision was based on the appreciation that these categories of ex-sailors of RIN lost their jobs/livelihood as a result of their participation in the RIN Mutiny. This was approved by the Government for implementation on June 19, 1973.

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5. Events at Sea

MAJOR OPERATIONS AND EXERCISES (1945-1950)

EARLY IN 1945, Germany having fallen and the end of the War almost in sight, the main thrust of allied maritime activity was in the eastern theatre.

In April 1945, the RIN's Bangor and Bathurst class minesweepers were formed into the 37th Minesweeping Flotilla and were deployed at Mandapam and thereafter at Kyauk Pyu. The Flotilla included Basset class trawlers for danbuoy laying. On May 2, 1945, the Flotilla took part in the sea-borne assault on Rangoon. *HMIS Cauvery* and *Sutlej* also took part in the operation leading to the capture of Rangoon. HMI ships, ranging from harbour defence motor launches to sloops, made hazardous journeys up to Burma's tortuous waterways and narrow chaungs, many of which were uncharted; the RIN ably assisted the land forces whenever called upon to do so. The British Admiralty has described the operation as "unprecedented in the annals of naval history."¹

Since the occupation of Rangoon, RIN sloops maintained anti-shipping patrols off the Tenasserim Coast and in the Tavoy area. *HMIS Assam* and *Sind* remained engaged in convoying troop transporters. The participation of *Hindustan* and *Assam* in the Victory Parade at Rangoon, therefore, gave recognition to the part played by the RIN in the liberation of Burma.

The Royal Indian Navy's salvage organisation¹ towed *S.S. Elhind* off the Mandapam breakwater (where she lay partly sunk) and subsequently sank her at sea. Similarly, the *Foremost* which had been sunk at the entrance to Mazagon Docks at Bombay, and the Vishakhapatnam Port Trust tug *Ranger*, which had been sunk in its approaches, were salvaged.

The second half of 1945 continued to witness naval activity in support of the occupation forces. *HMIS Narbada*, *Godavari* and *Kistna* maintained searching patrols in the Mergui Archipelago,² the Forest Straits and off Tavoy and Tenasserim coasts. Landing parties used to be sent for interrogating inhabitants and for collection of intelligence. The danbuoy layers, *HMIS Punjab* and *Deccan* which were deployed off Phuket Island at the northern end of Malacca Straits, assisted in fighting the fire on board *HMS Vestal* after a suicide bomber had crashed on her deck.

Narbada, *Godavari* and *Kistna*, the 37th Minesweeping Flotilla and a few other RIN units thereafter proceeded eastwards to Malaya and Dutch East

Indies. *Kistna* arrived at Penang on September 1, 1945 rendering assistance to the occupation forces. Further to the east, *HMIS Punjab, Bihar, Bengal* and some other RIN units did some excellent work in operations off Batavia (Jakarta) and the Java Coast as well as in the Sunda Straits.

HMIS Narbada arrived at Port Blair on September 26, 1945, escorting the mercy ship *Bandra* and remained at that port till November 5. During this period she did valuable work sending search parties to various islands to look for survivors, interrogating local inhabitants, collecting intelligence and providing vital communication links for the Army, the civil authorities and the Press, to India (mainland) and Ceylon. She was later relieved by *HMIS Kistna*.

HMIS Godavari and *Cauvery* had moved further eastward to join the British Pacific Fleet and were deployed on escort duties on the China coast.

Though the war with Japan had ended in as early as August 1945, the RIN units remained busy in a variety of post-war operations. This mainly consisted of mopping up operations, transportation of troops and prisoners and cleaning British and Japanese minefields in the eastern theatre. Simultaneously, this period witnessed a considerable amount of reorganisation of ships and smaller units of the RIN. A large number of ships were either placed in the reserve fleet, disposed of, returned to the owner, or converted back for trade.

These activities and reorganisation continued till India became independent.³ *HMIS Kistna* was deployed on anti-smuggling patrols in the Palk Strait at the request of the Madras Government. She was subsequently relieved by *HMIS Calcutta*.

The 37th Minesweeping Flotilla which had been decommissioned and placed on the Reserve Fleet was again commissioned for minesweeping operations in the Andaman Islands from October to December 1946. *Jumna* acted in support, serving as the victualling and stores issuing ship.

Four landing ships, which had been taken over from the Royal Navy, were commissioned at Vishakhapatnam and were used for dumping ammunition at sea off Vishakhapatnam and Port Blair.

HMIS Dhanush was converted into a Boys' Training Ship in June 1946 and undertook a cruise off the East African Coast terminating at Bombay in September. Her second training cruise commenced from Karachi on October 25, 1946 and she called at Madras, Port Blair, Chittagong, Vishakhapatnam and Trincomalee. She was replaced by *HMIS Tir*.

The eve of independence witnessed major changes.⁴ On June 3, 1947, negotiations between the British Government and the Indian leaders were successfully completed and on August 15, 1947, the two new self-governing dominions of India and Pakistan came into being. These events naturally affected the composition of the Royal Indian Navy and on July 1, 1947, a naval Sub-Committee was formed to make recommendations regarding the division of assets and liabilities of the undivided service. On the recommendations of the Committee, the Partition Council did the allocation of ships

to India and Pakistan respectively thus: Sloops 4, 2; frigates 2, 2; corvettes 1, nil; minesweepers 12, 4; marine survey vessel 1, nil; and trawlers 4, 2. Smaller craft too were similarly shared with all the landing craft being allocated to India.

Soon after Independence, negotiations were started with the British Government for the acquisition of one cruiser, three destroyers and other craft for the RIN. The number of ships which could be kept in commission in the reconstituted Royal Indian Navy was restricted by the shortage of personnel. The qualified people available were inadequate for the many and varied duties they could be called upon to perform. An easy solution to this problem could not be found as the training of personnel was handicapped by the lack of experienced instructors, and as a number of the well-equipped training establishments which were located in Karachi, were no longer available.

Before any concrete steps could be taken for the RIN's expansion, the Service had to undertake amphibious operations, to land the Indian Army for the Junagadh operations⁵—Exercise Peace as it was called. The operation remains one of the early highwater marks in the history of independent India's Navy.

The genesis of the Junagadh operations lay in certain provocative actions by the Nawab of the princely state. With India's independence, most of the princely states acceded to either India or Pakistan depending on their geographical contiguity. The state of Junagadh⁵ had no contiguity by land with Pakistan but yet its Nawab showed positive indication to accede to that country. This was neither acceptable to the people of Junagadh nor to its neighbouring princely states. Besides, within the main boundary of Junagadh lay a number of enclaves of other Kathiawar states, all of which had acceded to India. This group of states formed one compact geographic and socio-economic unit whose princely rulers and people, both inside and outside Junagadh, were agitated over the Nawab's inclinations.

Against this background, the Nawab of Junagadh, Sir Mahabatkhan Rasulkhanji⁵ and his Dewan (Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto—father of Mr. Z.A. Bhutto who later became Prime Minister of Pakistan), through various moves kept both the subjects and the Government of India guessing regarding their true intentions on the issue of accession. While telling his subjects and the other rulers of Kathiawar that he intended to accede to India, on August 15, 1947, the Nawab signed an instrument of accession to Pakistan. According to V.P. Menon,* the first intimation that the Government of India had about Junagadh's accession to Pakistan came from reports in the newspapers dated August 17, 1947.

The situation as it evolved was that with the lapse of British paramountcy over the princely states, the Sheikh of Mangrol (a state between Porbandar

*Rao Bahadur V.P. Menon, Reforms Commissioner to the Government of India from 1944 and Secretary to the Governor General (Public) from 1945 to 1946 and later Secretary, States Department/Ministry of States from 1947.

and Junagadh) and the Mulgarasias of Babariawad (a group of fifty-one villages) automatically became independent of the Nawab of Junagadh whose vassals they had been during the period of British paramountcy. On becoming independent, they executed instruments of accession with the Government of India. The Nawab of Junagadh⁵ who was still living in the illusory world of his overlordship over these territories, under instigation from Pakistan, sent his troops into Babariawad. Simultaneously, the Commanders-in-Chief were asked to prepare appreciations of an operation designed to occupy Babariawad, including preparations to go to the assistance of Mangrol and if (but only if) Junagadh took other offensive action, to be prepared to occupy Junagadh itself.

On September 21, 1947, a telegram was received by the Government of India from the Dewan of Junagadh in which he asserted that Babariawad and Mangrol were integral parts of Junagadh territory and that their accession to the Indian Union was invalid. The Dewan refused to withdraw the Junagadh forces from Babariawad.

The communique⁵ issued by the Government of India on September 25, and October 5, 1947 said, "they have made clear their attitude in regard to the accession of Junagadh to Pakistan. They have also made it clear that the military and police forces stationed by Junagadh in Babariawad and Mangrol should be withdrawn at once since these states have acceded to the Dominion of India. These forces have not been withdrawn. The Government of India has received reports that Junagadh authorities are taking oppressive action against the people of Babariawad. They are commandeering crops, issuing exacting orders in respect of other property, reaping harvest, breaking into houses and looting property, rations and other necessities of life have been stopped; and an attempt is being made to force the Chiefs of Babariawad to renounce accession to the Dominion of India and substitute it by accession to Pakistan.

On October 21, the Prime Minister, India, informed Prime Minister, Pakistan,⁵ that it was impossible for the Government of India to tolerate this state of affairs any longer. The Government of India was honour bound to take measures for the protection of territories which had acceded to India and had been promised protection from outside interference. In fulfilment of these commitments, the Indian Government would have to send to Mangrol and Babariawad detachments of its military forces and to take over the administration of these areas. The Prime Minister indicated that, instructions had been issued to the military authorities that they should go to these territories under a flag of truce with loud hailers over which it would be made clear to the people that they had no intention of opening fire except in self-protection.

The Government of India, in accordance with the decision announced in the press communique of October 5, scrupulously adhered to the arrangement by which it undertook not to enter into or cross Junagadh territory on the understanding that the Junagadh forces also agreed not to cross Indian

territory. Instances occurred where Junagadh forces crossed Indian territory more than once. In view of this, the Government of India considered that it was no longer bound by the previous undertaking that Indian forces would not cross or enter into Junagadh territory.

The Government of India wished to make it clear that in taking this step it had no intention⁵ of taking final possession of the territories; the only desire was to protect the people against oppressive measures till the question of accession was settled by plebiscite. Pending holding of plebiscite, the Indian Government proposed to invite the local officials to stay on if they so desire, as observers.

Meanwhile the disposition of troops⁵ in Kathiawar was going apace. Brigadier Gurdial Singh was in command of the force which was known as Kathiawar Defence Force (or KDF). The states of Navanagar, Bhavnagar and Porbandar which had acceded to India, had agreed at the request of the Government of India to place their state forces under the command of the Brigadier. All these forces were suitably deployed, their movements and manoeuvres creating a steadying effect all over Kathiawar which was agitated at having pockets of Pakistan in its midst as a consequence of Junagadh's intransigence, hostile acts and accession to Pakistan. The Army Commander had strict orders not to violate Junagadh territory in any way. On September 24, it was decided that an adequate force should be sent to Mangrol and Babariawad.

On October 10, 1947, while a meeting of the Joint Defence Council of India and Pakistan, attended by Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan, was going on, a telegram was received by the Government of India that Junagadh troops had entered Mangrol as well.

A week earlier on October 4, 1947, the Government of India had already considered the Junagadh situation⁵ and directed the Chiefs of Staff to instruct the Commander of the Kathiawar Defence Force to prepare a plan for the occupation of Babariawad and Mangrol in case this should be ordered, with the object of reducing to a minimum any exchange of shots with Junagadh forces in these territories. In the meantime, efforts were continued to resolve the issue of Junagadh, Mangrol and Babariawad with Pakistan through discussions. As no progress was made and it became obvious that Pakistan was simply marking time, the Government of India decided on October 21, 1947, that Mangrol and Babariawad would have to be occupied. Two days later, a plan was drawn up which was finally approved on October 25. Lord Mountbatten was anxious that the occupation should be entrusted to the Central Reserve Police, but Sardar Patel maintained that this would be taking unnecessary risks and he was firm that the operation should be handled by the Armed Forces.

Earlier a communique⁵ issued on October 16, 1947 said, "In pursuance of their policy of locating units of the Indian Defence Services in Kathiawar, a company of Dogras of the 25th Kumaon Regiment with detachments of the Royal Indian Engineers, Indian Corps of Signals and Indian Army

Medical Corps, under the command of Major Shyam Rattan is being landed at Jaffarabad from ships of the Royal Indian Navy on October 17, 1947. The ships taking part are the sloops *HMIS Kistna* (Commander R.D. Katari, RIN, Senior Officer) and *HMIS Jumna*, the fleet minesweeper *HMIS Konkan* and Tank Landing Craft Nos. 1358 and 1360.

“After the troops have been landed, courtesy visit will be paid by *HMIS Kistna* to Mul Dwarka near Kodinar (Baroda territory) and Bhavnagar. Visits by ships of the Royal Indian Navy to other Kathiawar ports are also being arranged.

“The Government of India have also decided to locate a Brigade group at Rajkot. This formation will consist of units of the Indian Army and troops of Baroda, Bhavnagar, Navanagar and Porbandar states, the whole being commanded by Brigadier Gurdial Singh.

“As previously announced No. 8 Squadron, Royal Indian Air Force, composed of Tempest aircraft under the command of Squadron Leader P.S. Gill, RIAF, is now located in Kathiawar.”

The Navy was responsible for the landing of troops and equipment on the Kathiawar Coast and the planning and control of the Landing operation⁶ was entrusted to Commodore M. H. St. L. Nott, DSO, CBE, RN (Special List) who was formerly with the Royal Indian Navy and who was serving as the Chief of Staff at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi. The naval force, comprising three frigates (*Kistna*, *Cauvery* and *Jumna*), three fleet minesweepers (*Konkan*, *Madrass* and *Rohilkhand*), three landing craft (tanks) (LCTs 1310, 1358 and 1360) and one motor launch (ML 420) was placed under the command of Commander R.D. Katari (later Chief of the Naval Staff), who was also the Commanding Officer of *HMIS Kistna*. The other two frigates, *HMIS Cauvery* and *HMIS Jumna*, were respectively under the command of Lieutenant Commander R. Sawhny and Lieutenant Commander B.A. Samson (later Flag Officer Commanding, Indian Fleet). A small mobile communication link, which was established ashore to provide a communication link between the naval force and the overall commander at Rajkot was under Lieutenant N. Krishnan (later Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command).

The naval force⁷ was to land three columns of troops designated ‘Namcol’ (after Major Nambiar, the Commander of the troops) ‘Ratcol’ (after Major Ratan) and ‘Jaffcol’ (after Jaffarabad). In order to straddle Junagadh geographically, it was decided to land the columns with arms, equipment and armour at Porbandar, Jaffarabad and Mangrol on the Kathiawar Coast. The naval force was also required to provide necessary logistic support to the troops from seaward. An air force unit also stood by but was not called upon to play any role.

Before, however, the landing could be effected, it was essential to carry out the hydrographic survey of the beach and choose a beach-head with an appropriate gradient for facilitating landing operation. The job was entrusted to *HMIS Jumna* (NOPIN ONE); Lieutenant K.L. Kulkarni (later Flag

Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command), Executive Officer of the ship along with two other officers and some sailors carried out beach gradient (using sextant and tide pole) in the area; they laid transits to facilitate the entry and beaching of LCTs.

The main phase⁸ 'Exercise Peace' was launched with NOPIN TWO which involved the landing of 14 Army officers, 251 Indian Other Ranks, three tanks and 13 vehicles at Porbandar. This was successfully accomplished on October 5, 1947. The naval force for the operation consisted of two frigates—*HMIS Kistna* and *Cawery*, two minesweepers *HMIS Konkan* and *Madras*, three Landing Craft (Tanks)—LCTs 1310, 1358 and 1360 and one motor launch ML 420.

The second phase was the landing of a military force consisting of six officers, 93 Other Ranks and four vehicles at Jaffarabad and this was accomplished on October 17, 1947, with *HMIS Kistna*, *Jumna* and *Konkan* and LCTs 1358 and 1360 taking part.

The third phase of NOPIN TWO necessitated the landing of a military force consisting of eight officers, 152 Other Ranks, three tanks and eight vehicles at Mangrol and this was successfully accomplished on November 1, 1947. The ships that participated were *HMIS Kistna*, *Cawery*, *Konkan* and *Rohilkhand* and motor launch ML 420.

The naval personnel stayed on until a civil administration was set up in the State. This coincided with another significant event, the restoration of the original gates of the famous Somnath temple at Prabhas Patan, Veraval by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The officers and men of the RIN were guests of honour at the restoration ceremony at which a decision to reconstruct the temple and to restore it to its original splendour, was taken. It was indeed an act of historic justice!

The Junagadh operation also led to the first court martial in independent India's Navy. Petric George Mungavin, a temporary Lieutenant of the Royal Indian Navy Volunteer Reserve was in command of the motor launch ML 420, which was to participate in the landing operations at Porbander and Mangrol. He, however, got cold feet and refused to sail and made excuses which were transparently untenable. The authorities had to perforce remove him from command and appoint another Commanding Officer.

Lieutenant Mungavin⁹ was tried by court martial on board *HMIS Akbar* at Bombay on December 1, 1947. The three charges that he faced were: "did presume to delay the performance of motor launch ML 420 in which he was commanded to sail for taking part in an operation," "wilful disobedience" and "conduct unbecoming of the character of an officer," in that, with a view to avoiding service in His Majesty's Indian Motor Launch ML 420, he had made a false representation. Lieutenant Mungavin was found guilty and convicted. Commodore Nott, who conducted the prosecution, asked for the sentence of death to be pronounced against the accused. Mungavin, however, was let off with a dismissal from service.

Exercise Peace was the first major naval operation undertaken by inde-

pendent India's Navy. It was the first time in centuries that the Royal Indian Navy did not function as an adjunct of the Royal Navy or at the dictates of Whitehall but as a newly independent country's nascent sea arm at the orders of the representatives of the people of the country.

Major Nambiar, Commander of the NAMCOL column of troops (later rose to the rank of Brigadier) when recently interviewed said: "KDF was the Army's first post-independent venture. Perhaps for good reasons the operation conducted at an area level was not brilliant. There was little overall coordination and direction from the top. Communication from KDF to the Navy or me was non-existent. Navy on the other hand had everything buttoned up to a fine edge and one got the impression that their officers were an efficient, well tempered and honed bunch."¹⁰

Delhi joined the fleet on September 16, 1948 and carried out two very successful cruises,¹¹ one round the coast of India and the other to Mauritius, Seychelles and to a number of ports on the East African Coast. During the cruise round the Indian Coast, *HMIS Cauvery*, *Kistna* and *Sutlej* were in company. *HMIS Tir* joined the *Delhi* at Zanzibar for the cruise round the East Coast of Africa. During this period, *HMIS Delhi*, with the other ships of the squadron, also carried out a number of exercises at Trincomalee with the East Indies squadron of the Royal Navy.

Delhi thereafter remained the centre of attraction and the flagship of the Indian Navy for decades to come until she was decommissioned in 1978. Besides, commanding her rightful status as one of the capital ships of our Navy, she held a place of sentiment in the heart of every naval officer or sailor because almost all naval personnel had served aboard her decks at one time or the other in the course of their career.

Delhi certainly fulfilled her role in projecting India's maritime image both at home and abroad. For the first time on January 4, 1950 she carried the cadets¹² of the National Defence Academy on a 10-day cruise from Bombay to Karwar, Cochin and Minicoy and back. The experience gained by the impressionable minds of young cadets was valuable and the event was thereafter made a regular annual feature.

Simultaneously, *Tir*, at the request of the Government of Burma carried the sacred relics of Arahans Sariputta and Mogallana to Burma. These relics were received in Calcutta by the Prime Minister of Burma from the Mahabodhi Society and placed on board the *Tir* on February 3, 1950. These were again received by him from the ship on February 8 at Rangoon.

Rajput, *Ranjit* and *Rana*, ships of the Destroyer Flotilla, contributed considerably in putting the Navy on its rightful pedestal. These ships carried the students and the directing Staff of the Defence Services Staff College on a week-long inter-service coordination exercise and combined operations. The Royal Naval units at Trincomalee also participated. The Flotilla sailed from Cochin on February 27, 1950 and returned on March 4 after calling at Trincomalee. Very soon thereafter, the Flotilla called at Colombo.

During May 1950 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was India's first Deputy

Prime Minister, took passage on *INS Delhi* from Bombay on a visit to Cochin.

An important landmark in India's naval and maritime history was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Indonesia¹³ on board the flagship *Delhi* in 1950. The cruiser was escorted by the three destroyers and at times by the 12th Frigate Squadron which visited Penang and the Andaman and Nicobar ports. The Prime Minister embarked *Delhi* along with his daughter, Shrimati Indira Gandhi and grandsons Rajiv (age 5) and Sanjay (age 3) on June 2, 1950 and arrived at Jakarta on June 7. After the Prime Minister had disembarked, the ship visited Surabaya and Bali. During their stay in Indonesia, the officers and men of the Navy received tremendous hospitality and courtesy. The *Delhi* was commanded by Captain A.K. Chatterji (later Admiral and Chief of the Naval Staff). The *Delhi* also flew the flag of Rear Admiral Barnard, the first Rear Admiral Commanding the Indian Naval Squadron (RACINS).

Rear Admiral Barnard's report¹⁴ on the Indonesian cruise gives an interesting account of the crossing-the-line (equator) ceremony with Prime Minister Nehru on board. It states, "ships were out of routine for the crossing-the-line ceremony. In *Delhi*, Neptune's court assembled on the quarter-deck and in the course of the usual speeches, Neptune was warned that, in accordance with the Constitution of India, he should change his name to Varuna. . . . Neptune's court then proceeded from the quarter-deck to the top of 'A' turret, accompanied by the Prime Minister and his party. In due course the Prime Minister was brought before the court and charged as follows: firstly, he worked too hard, secondly, he had too many telephones on his desks, and thirdly, he delivered too many long speeches."

Said Admiral Barnard about Pandit Nehru in his report,¹⁴ "Shortly after his arrival, I asked him to go wherever he wanted in the ship and talk to ratings at their work, and said, I hoped he would do so without being surrounded by a crowd of gold lace and senior officers. After his first good night's rest, his inquiring mind was interested in all aspects of the ship's activities. I think the thing that struck him most, apart from the overcrowding of ship-life, was the fact that in the various messes there is a wide diversity of background, religion and language which is, in effect, a minute cross-section of India; yet we somehow, because of our naval training, manage to get along together and smile in confined quarters. I think he saw in the ships, a microscopic example of the great work for the unity of India to which he had devoted his life."

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6. Personnel

RECORDING THE ORIGINS of the Indian Navy, the Report of the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny Commission of Enquiry, 1946, says that "From the creation of the Honourable The East India Company's Navy in 1612 to the modern times, the Indian Navy has had a history of alternate expansion in the face of emergency, the successful accomplishment of its task and subsequent retrenchment, sometimes almost to vanishing point. It has had little tradition as a fighting force and has been built up when required on the Royal Naval pattern."¹ During World War I, 1914-18, the six ships of the Royal Indian Marine (RIM), the predecessor of the RIN, served as auxiliary cruisers and the officers of the service served at sea with the Royal Navy in many theatres of war. The total manning strength of the RIM at that time was 240 officers, 60 warrant officers and 2000 ratings.

After the War, the manpower of the RIN was drastically reduced by demobilisation in accordance with the recommendations of various committees including the Inchcape Committee. The Service had been reduced to a mere dockyard with a small hydrographic survey unit. The far-reaching effects of these drastic measures were felt when there was an acute shortage of officers and ratings at the time of the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Stoppage of recruitment and reduction of the size of the Service during the period between the two Wars was sought to be justified by the fact that the security of the Indian Coast had been entrusted to the Royal Navy on payment of annual subvention of £ 100,000 by the Government of India to the British Government.

In 1925, a committee headed by Lord Rawlinson,² the then Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces, recommended the conversion of the RIM into a navy with full combatant status on the lines of the Royal Navy with a fleet which would initially comprise four armed sloops or escort vessels, two patrol vessels, four minesweeping trawlers, two survey ships and a depot ship. The Service was to be initially commanded by a Rear Admiral of the Royal Navy. The recommendations of the committee were accepted by the Government and on October 2, 1934, the Royal Indian Navy came into being after the Indian Navy Discipline Act had been passed by the Legislative Assembly and the Council of States in February 1934. Consequently, a five-year plan for the expansion of the Navy was put forward in June 1937. This plan³ mainly comprised

the setting up of a Boys' Training Establishment at Manora (Karachi) and increasing the manpower from 121 officers, 48 warrant officers and 1064 ratings to 146 officers, 60 warrant officers, 1313 ratings and 250 boys. With this expansion in the Service, payment of the annual subvention of £ 100,000 and the miscellaneous charges of £ 15,000 to £ 20,000 would be discontinued on condition that a sea-going squadron of not less than six escort vessels would be maintained and this would be required to undertake local naval defence of Indian ports and to cooperate with the Royal Navy in the defence of India.

This five-year plan was followed about a year later by a nine-year plan comprising recommendations from the Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy (FOCRIN) for the expansion of the Service. The main features⁴ of this plan were: a further increase in the active service strength of personnel to 169 officers, 104 warrant officers and 2562 ratings (including boys); increase in the strength of reserve personnel to 252 Royal Indian Naval Reserve Officers, 71 Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers, 912 Royal Indian Reserve ratings, 593 Royal Indian Fleet Reserve ratings and 286 Communication Reserve ratings; setting up of adequate training cadres of boys and apprentices; strengthening the fleet by rearming the sloops *Hindustan* and *Indus*, replacing the sloops *Cornwallis*, *Lawrence* and *Clive* and building one more escort vessel, acquiring six small minesweepers and eight motor torpedo boats for local naval defence; providing for 48 auxiliary vessels which could be taken up in the event of the outbreak of a war—25 as minesweepers and the rest as anti-submarine vessels; providing training establishments with adequate training aids and other facilities at Bombay, Cochin and Vishakhapatnam with sub-depots for subsidiary training of Reserve officers at Calcutta, Madras and Karachi; and replacing old ships by means of a sinking fund.

The nine-year plan was carefully examined by the Defence authorities in India and in the Admiralty and, based on its proposals, a special committee, the Chatfield Committee, was appointed for scrutinising the proposals. This Committee recommended the acquisition⁵ of four Bittern Class 19-knot escort vessels; re-arming of the *Indus* and the *Hindustan* and scrapping of the *Clive*, the *Cornwallis* and the *Lawrence*; construction of four Mastiff Class mine-sweeping trawlers; loaning of four Halcyon Class minesweepers from the Royal Navy; and the setting up of the training establishments proposed by the FOCRIN.

Preparations were being made to implement these recommendations but these efforts were thwarted by the sudden outbreak of World War II when the RIN personnel comprised a mere 109 officers, 63 warrant officers and 1443 ratings in active service and a Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve strength of 21 Executive Branch and 16 Accountants' Branch officers and two part-time medical officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

During the period immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, 31 auxiliary vessels were converted into minesweepers or patrol vessels and by

the end of 1939, the strength of personnel in the RIN had nearly doubled. Officers were recruited to the various cadres from the merchant navy and a wide variety of trades and professions in civil life. Ratings came from the merchant navy and also from the civvy street but for reasons of pay and allowances the response from merchant navy sailors was rather poor.

The increase in the strength of personnel⁶ between the outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the cessation of hostilities in 1945 is as given in Table 1:

TABLE 1

Officers

	<i>RIN</i>	<i>RINR</i>	<i>RINVR</i>	<i>Total</i>
September 1939	114	9	29	152
December 1939	117	65	52	234
December 1940	132	108	163	403
December 1941	161	155	387	703
December 1942	170	261	880	1311
December 1943	220	301	1671	2192
December 1944	241	335	2104	2680
December 1945	269	250	1919	2438

Warrant Officers

	<i>RIN</i>	<i>On loan from RN</i>	<i>Total</i>
September 1939	35	11	46
December 1939	125	12	137
December 1940	141	9	150
December 1941	151	21	172
December 1942	180	23	203
December 1943	181	25	206
December 1944	187	34	221
December 1945	198	16	214

Ratings

	<i>Continuous Service Non-continuous Service Special Service</i>	<i>Hostilities Only</i>	<i>Transferred from the Army</i>	<i>Total</i>
September 1939	1313	162	—	1475
December 1939	1449	1400	—	2849
December 1940	2253	1463	—	3716
December 1941	4396	2056	—	6452
December 1942	9258	3506	—	12764
December 1943	14679	4783	2089	21551
December 1944	18668	4698	1779	25145
December 1945	18610	1678	905	21193

Note: By the end of the War on August 15, 1945, the strength of ratings had actually risen to 27,651 which fell to 21,193 by December 1945 due to large-scale demobilisation.

Besides the tremendous increase in the size of the Navy and its strength of personnel, the percentage of ratings from different ethnic,⁷ religious and regional backgrounds underwent a major change during the War years. While the percentages of Muslims and Hindu ratings in 1939 were 75 and 9.25 respectively, by the end of the War, the percentage of Muslims fell to 35 and that of the Hindus shot up to 42.5. Similarly, the percentages of ratings from the Punjab and Bombay in 1939 were 44.25 and 38, but by 1945, Punjab's representation had fallen to 21.25 per cent while that of Bombay crashed to a lowly 8.25 per cent. Tables 2 and 3 provide an interesting picture of the response of the various communities and regions to the glib sales talk of the recruiting officers.

TABLE 2
Religious/Ethnic representation (%)

	1939	1945
Hindu	9.25	42.5
Muslim	75	35
Christian	13	19.5
Sikh	0.25	1.5
Anglo-Indian	2	1.25
Miscellaneous	0.5	0.25

TABLE 3
Regional representation (%)
(These percentages do not add up to 100% as they are only shown to the nearest 0.25%)

	1939	1945
Kashmir	0.5	1.25
N.W.F.P.	3.25	3
Delhi	0.25	0.5
Punjab	44.75	21.25
Sind	0.25	0.25
Rajputana & Central India	0.25	3.25
Uttar Pradesh	3.25	7.25
Bombay	38	8.25
Madras	4.25	25.25
Travancore	0.25	9
Cochin	0.25	1.5
Hyderabad		
Mysore		
Bihar & Orissa	—	1.75
Bengal	0.5	11.5
Assam	0.25	1
Others	—	3
Goa & Portuguese India	2.25	0.75

Officers recruited to the various cadres of the RIN were mainly British, Indian and Anglo-Indian but a small number belonged to several other countries. Thus, their ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds varied which is an indication of the urgency that prompted their induction into a Service that was basically Indian though under foreign rule, Table 4 shows the details of officers⁸ of each nationality that joined the RIN during the War.

TABLE 4

	<i>British</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>Anglo- Indian</i>	<i>Other Nationalities</i>	<i>Total</i>
1939	57	29	4	1	91
1940	165	42	4	1	212
1941	240	77	17	10	344
1942	309	168	45	26	548
1943	430	233	99	21	783
1944	140	280	48	8	476
1945	36	120	39	3	198
Total	1377	949	256	70	2652

The officers of 'other nationalities' numbering 70 shown in the table were recruited when Japan entered the War in 1942 and it was felt necessary to expand the RIN to a much greater degree. The mobilisation net had to be cast far and wide and the frontiers of the British Empire had to be crossed mainly because of the acute shortage of officers with a knowledge of the sea. The 'foreigners'⁹ recruited included one American, nine Dutch, one French, one Turk, one Goan, five Iraqis, three Jews, eleven Norwegians, two Russians, two Swedes, one Yugoslav, evacuees from Singapore, Malaya and Burma as well as men from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. It was because of this unbelievable and kaleidoscopic mix of national and international representation in the RIN that the Service those days was sometimes referred to as the 'Really Incredible Navy' (RIN). In fact, at that time it was a near manifestation of a miniature League of Nations!

The officers⁸ of the RIN came from a wide variety of professions which is another indication of the urgency that necessitated their recruitment. Some of these professions were: sharebroker, merchant navy service, clerk, electrical trade, accountant, telegraphist, manager, Burma Civil Service, broadcasting, Bengal Pilot Service, school-master, lecturer, foreman, stores officer, overseer, lawyer, landlord, engineer, insurance agent, agricultural adviser, art director, railway driver, auditor, sugar process operator, private businessman, railway employee, jute trader, meteorologist, chemist, mercantile assistant, journalist, bank employee, port officer, shipping assistant, Burma pilot, planter and educationist from Bahrain.

Before World War II, ordinary seamen in the RIN and in the merchant navy drew the same salary¹⁰ of Rs. 20 per month and some allowances. When the War broke out, the merchant navy granted a bonus of 25 per cent to its ordinary seamen which was followed by a similar increase in the pay of 'Hostilities Only' ordinary seamen of the RIN but the Active Service seamen of the RIN continued to be paid Rs. 20 per month. On December 31, 1939, the basic pay of the merchant navy seamen was once again raised to Rs. 30 which was perhaps the reason why a large number of merchant navy sailors did not volunteer to join the RIN during the War. The main bulk of 'Hostilities Only' seamen who drifted into the Service were presumably those who could not obtain jobs elsewhere.

The sudden increase in the size of the RIN after the outbreak of the War necessitated a large intake of Active Service ratings within a short period, especially between 1942 and 1944. In order to attract suitable young men to the Service, therefore, the scales of pay of all ratings of this cadre, in the seamen, stoker, writer and communication branches and later, the domestic and instructor branches, had to be revised several times between 1942 and 1944, the communications branch having been given an edge over the others because of higher educational qualifications at entry. Table 5 gives an indication of the degree to which the improvements were effected in two of the branches.¹¹

TABLE 5
Pay received by ratings

	<i>Seaman Branch</i>		<i>Communication Branch</i>	
	1942	1944	1942	1944
Boy (first 12 months)	15	15	15	15
Boy (remaining 6 months)	15	20	15	20
Boy (seagoing)	—	30	—	30
Ordinary rate	20	40	26	60
Able rate	25	45	34	65
Leading rate	34	60	44	70
Petty Officer	50	85	55	95
Chief Petty Officer	70	110	80	115

Vice Admiral Godfrey, justified the increase in the intake of the ratings thus: "From 1940 onwards energetic steps were taken to persuade the Government of India to embark on a planned expansion of the Service coupled with a shipbuilding programme. Dilatoriness in arriving at a decision strangled the growth of the Service and when the decision was finally taken, it presented the Navy with an almost impossible problem as regards recruitment and training of the numbers required.

"With the comparatively slow expansion of the Service between 1938 and

1941 there is no doubt that the Army had a clear field for recruitment and secured the cream of the population; this was particularly the case in northern India. To obtain the numbers required in later years it became necessary to open up recruitment on an India-wide scale, large numbers of ratings from Bengal and southern India were enrolled together with a comparatively large number from the cities as opposed to the villages in India."

One of the fall-outs of the large intake in training was that the training establishments were overcrowded, the training staff was inadequate and hence the quality¹² of training suffered. For example, the Radar School was designed for 120 ratings but it was made to handle 308 ratings at a time. As a consequence, more time was devoted to technical and professional training at the expense of disciplinary training which directly affected the quality of the ratings that these establishments turned out in such large numbers.

In 1943 the process of planned expansion of the RIN ceased but for various reasons the authorities had not reached the target figures. For example, the number of officers and ratings borne in May 1943 were 1959 and 13,873 while the target figures were 2,447 and 18,838 respectively. Despite the optimism of the planners, there was a considerably large shortfall in the personnel strength of the RIN which, on hindsight, can be ascribed to: (1) near total ignorance of the career prospects in the Navy in areas away from the coastal region due to the failure of the recruiting organisation to spread knowledge about the Service; (2) the deleterious effect of the news from the front on the reverse suffered by the Allied Naval Forces during the earlier years of the War; and (3) the adverse effect of the reports on the service conditions sent home by ratings during their first few weeks in the Service.

Another factor that contributed to the shortfall was desertion by a large number of recruits. In some months, wastage¹³ due to desertion and various other causes actually exceeded the intake. In fact, by the end of the War, 43,000 men had been recruited to produce a borne strength of 27,651. The wastage due to desertion and other reasons being an incredible figure of 15,349—over 55 per cent of the borne strength!

There had been complaints among recruits of harsh discipline, bad food, unsympathetic treatment and other teething troubles. Also, while the Indian Army and the RIAF would send the recruits home on leave on completion of their training, there was no such system in the Navy. But the biggest single disillusioning factor was the totally incorrect and rosy picture that some unscrupulous recruiting officers and their agents drew about the conditions of service and the prospects of advancement so as to meet their recruitment targets. False hopes and assurances, which were soon to be belied, on such important matters as pay, promotion, future prospects, post-war resettlement, food, accommodation and treatment directly led to the lowering of morale immediately after recruitment and consequent desertion by several recruits. The ratings also resented working as messmen, serving food to senior ratings, performing certain duties of "disagreeable character" as

cleaning ships and lavatories and sharing food cooked in a common galley (kitchen) with persons from different castes and religions. In one of his reports, Vice Admiral Godfrey said, "The average rating firmly believed that he was going to be found a post-war job by the Service. Government and the Navy cannot be held blameless for this. Much of the recruiting advertising was literally on the lines of 'Join the Navy and secure yourself a post-war job.' Admittedly in the text of the advertisement no specific promise was made but the caption definitely implied that this would be done."¹⁴

In one of the recruitment posters, the copy read, "Permanent careers in the RIN. Earn while you learn. Promotion to Warrant Officers and Commissioned Rank." This was a piece of blatant untruth as the short-service ratings could never hope to rise even to the rank of warrant officers, let alone commissioned ranks.

Whatever the drawbacks in the quality of training and service conditions, the performance of the RIN personnel during the entire period of the War was commendable. The decorations¹⁵ awarded to officers and ratings of the Service included one Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, two Distinguished Service Orders, one Officer of the Order of the British Empire, one Knighthood, one Companion of the Order of the Bath, 10 Companions of the Order of the Indian Empire, one Companion of the Order of the British Empire, 18 Members of the Order of the British Empire, 15 Distinguished Service Crosses, eight Officers of the Order of the British India, two Indian Orders of Merit, 28 Distinguished Service Medals, 10 Indian Defence Service Medals, 16 British Empire Medals, one Royal Humane Society Medal, 105 Mentions in Despatches and 118 Commendations from various authorities—an impressive tally indeed.

The casualties¹⁵ suffered by RIN personnel during the War included 27 officers, two warrant officers and 105 ratings killed in action; 14 officers, two warrant officers and 123 ratings wounded; and two ratings missing.

Immediately on the cessation of hostilities on August 15, 1945, operations for the post-war planning, demobilisation and resettlement of personnel were initiated. Naval Headquarters set up a Demobilisation and Resettlement Section under the Chief of Personnel and also a Post-War Planning Directorate which was responsible for planning the peacetime strength of personnel in the RIN. This directorate was later merged with the Plans Directorate.

The Post-War Planning Directorate worked out three different limits¹⁶ of personnel strength—the upper limit being the strength required during the occupational period of 18 to 24 months immediately following the War, the lower limit which was the minimum personnel strength required for ensuring the security of sea-lanes and sea-frontiers and the lowest limit which was to be adopted in case financial considerations did not permit the maintenance of the lower limit.

The Commander-in-Chief of the three Services set up an Inter-Service Demobilisation Planning Staff¹⁷ (ISDPS), which included a representative of the FOCRIN, and the RIN Release Regulations were put into effect from

May 8, 1945. The release system was uniformly applied to all three Services and was worked out on the basis of age and length of service, top priority being given to personnel who had completed 50 years of age. Other personnel to be demobilised were divided into three categories: Class A for those whose release would be based on age and length of service; Class B for those who had to be released "for work of national importance" irrespective of age and length of service, and Class C for those who sought release on compassionate grounds.

From September 1945 to April 1946 no ratings were recruited though the entry of boys continued. This was mainly because peacetime physical and educational standards for entry into the RIN had to be finalised. The Naval Wings¹⁸ of the Recruit Reception Camps at Bangalore and Meerut were disbanded on October 1, 1946 and recruitment taken over by the naval training establishments based on a provisional cadre strength of 5,000 ratings of the Royal Indian Fleet Reserve. The ex-Army ratings were drafted back to their parent units, their number till the end of October 1946 being 695.

The post-war demobilisation plans¹⁹ envisaged the release of 940 reserve officers and 9,000 ratings which was begun in September 1945 and completed in April 1946. The reserve officers released included 630 officers of the executive branch, 174 officers of the special branch and some officers of the Army who had been transferred to the Navy during the War. These officers were demobilised through the release centre at *HMIS Feroze*, Bombay. *HMIS Hamla II* was recommissioned as *HMIS Kakauri* in September 1945 and functioned as the demobilisation centre for ratings. In the first phase, 5464 ratings were released which included 1566 ex-Army personnel transferred back to their parent units and 1385 'Hostilities Only' ratings who were in the merchant navy before enlisting in the RIN.

The recruitment²⁰ policy also underwent some revision and eligibility was restricted to Indians who were subjects of British or Indian states or domiciled in them, Anglo-Indians domiciled in British India or Indian states, Goans whose naturalisation papers conformed to the requirements of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914 and recruits from Burma, Sri Lanka and Africa. The language policy was also revised and it was decided to accept recruits who could speak and understand either English or Urdu and were able to write English, Roman Urdu, Arabic or Devnagari. In order to improve the educational standards of recruits, the duration of the training courses was increased and the percentage of qualifying marks in the passing out examinations in *HMIS Akbar* raised.

The cadre of ratings²¹ for the Royal Indian Fleet Reserve was provisionally fixed at 5000 and composed of 1915 seamen, 347 signalmen, 452 telegraphists, 95 radio mechanics (S), 84 radio mechanics (W), 192 radar mechanics, 370 engine room artificers, 158 electrical artificers, 125 shipwright artificers, 67 ordnance artificers, 722 stokers, 136 sick berth attendants, 175 writers, 85 store assistants, 41 regulating branch ratings and 36 school-masters.

Based on the decision to set up a permanent cadre²² of officers for the Royal Indian Navy and to introduce new methods of selection, a qualifying examination to be conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission which would conform to the Civil Service Commission examination held in the United Kingdom for candidates for the Royal Navy, was introduced in 1945. By the end of that year, however, only 20 cadets could be recruited against the projected requirement of 44 cadets for 1944 and 1945.

It was also decided in 1945 to offer 106 permanent regular commissions to the officers belonging to the permanent and temporary RINR and RINVR, out of which 66 were to be Indian and 40 British officers. Some of the temporary officers of the RINR and RINVR were permitted to be retained on their substantive rank based on certain considerations of War service seniority in their parent cadre and age and in many cases, based on consideration of age only. This resulted in major seniority changes with far-reaching effects; older RINR and RINVR officers who had entered the Service later became senior to younger regular and reserve officers who had joined Service much earlier. This grant of seniority, then known as "fictitious" seniority, was discontinued later but by that time the RIN list had undergone a major and permanent metamorphosis affecting appointments at the highest level in the future.

In 1946, the cadre of officers was divided into two lists: I—Active List, and II—officers permanently transferred for service under the Department of Commerce in Mercantile Marine appointments. The number of permanent regular commissions²³ to be offered to officers of the RIN Reserves was increased from 106 to 156 and the British component reduced from 40 to 11. A scheme for short-service commissions with a contractual period of three to five years was also introduced. Proposals for the creation of three new branches, viz., the Supply and Secretariat branch, the Electrical branch and the Education branch, were put up to the Government for approval. Approval was also accorded for the creation of the rank of Rear Admiral in the peace establishment of the Service. Six cadets were recruited during the year and 11 officers were deputed to the United Kingdom for specialist courses in radio and radar, gunnery, torpedo and anti-submarine, navigation and direction, electrical conversion and dockyard courses. Five officers completed the Staff Course, four at the Naval Staff College at Greenwich and one at the Staff College, Quetta.

Consequent to the partition in 1947, Indian officers were given the option to elect²⁴ service with either of the two navies on the basis of the following:

a) Muslims residing in India and non-Muslims from Pakistan areas could choose service with either Navy.

b) Muslims from Pakistan could opt for service only with the Pakistan Navy and non-Muslims from India could opt for service only with the RIN.

c) Officers who did not wish to serve either Navy had the option to retire without any compensatory benefits.

With the departure of British officers, a serious shortage in the officer cadre, particularly in the senior ranks, was created and hence a number of British officers, who volunteered to serve on the basis of extended service, were selected for a period of three years with effect from January 1, 1948. The number of cadets to be recruited was raised to 46 and 47 per year for 1949 and 1950 respectively, some officers of the RIN Reserve were offered short-service commission and direct recruitment of officers was resorted to as well. The Special Branch of the RINVR was abolished in September 1948 but the officers of this Branch, who wore distinctive green stripes on their epaulettes, were allowed to continue in the RIN.

By the end of 1950, the British representation²⁵ in the RIN was 61 RN and eight RN Special List officers with an outstanding demand for the loan of 19 more officers. Thirty-three Special Entry cadets were recruited during the year and sent to the U.K. for training with the Royal Navy and 30 naval cadets were recruited into the Joint Services Wing (JSW) of the National Defence Academy, Dehra Dun. The first batch of 21 naval cadets passed out of the JSW in December 1950 and proceeded to the U.K. for further naval training with the Royal Navy. Forty-eight candidates were recruited direct from civil life as Commissioned Officers. Out of these, 33 joined the Executive branch, seven joined the Engineering branch and eight joined the Supply and Secretariat branch. The total number of direct entry officers recruited since Independence was 122. Fifteen candidates were recruited into the permanent cadre of the Education branch as Commissioned Instructor Officers. Besides, six released officers and 10 Reserve Officers were granted short service commission in the Navy. Thirty-three officers were deputed to undergo various courses and attachment with the Royal Navy. Revised rules for officers' leave, promotion, ages of compulsory retirement and tenure of appointment were also introduced.

At the outbreak of the War, a number of officers' wives and other ladies started work as civilians in the cypher offices throughout the country, working for the Army, the Royal Indian Navy and the Royal Indian Air Force. On April 9, 1942, they formed the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India).²⁶ Its object was to assign some of the jobs pertaining to the military service to women and thereby release men for service in the field.

The creation²⁷ of this new women's service produced a feeling of *esprit-de-corps* within the naval establishments where they were employed, but, more importantly, after the loss of Singapore a heavy burden was thrown on the RIN signal organisation so that it was beneficial to recruit a number of intelligent English-speaking girls to take over these duties where possible. The personnel employed with the RIN were formed into a separate wing called the Naval Wing in February 1944. They were called the WRINS (Women's Royal Indian Naval Service).

In addition to cypher duties, the girls were trained and employed as teleprinters and dome teacher operators; typists; telephonists; loggers; filers; message checkers and duty distribution officers; and clerks. In the clerical

field, they helped in ships offices; worked in war information rooms and on war maps; also, many were employed in detachment and unit offices, keeping account of pay and allowances; and in Fleet Mail Offices. There were WRINS at the Naval Gunnery Establishment, *HMIS Himalaya*, Karachi where they worked on radio telephones, on the projectors as qualified cinema-operators, on precision machines and on ordnance duties.

Chief officer Peggy Cooper (now Mrs. M.I. Skipwith) has recorded in the RIN Association Journal (1984) that "in 1943 the WRINS numbered 41 officers and 204 ratings but, two years later, there were 242 officers and 746 ratings, by which time 43 per cent of the officers and 77 per cent of the ratings were Indian. During the three-day Mutiny in February 1946 it was significant that the WRINS in all the ports stood fast and showed no signs of disaffection."

Recruitment to this cadre was suspended and *HMIS Jahanara* at Ahmednagar and at *HMIS Nalini* at Calcutta, the two WRINS Recruiting Centres, were closed down. The messes at Admiral's House, Chateau Windsor and Marble Hall, Bombay were given up and all officers and WRINS transferred to Vasant Sagar in August 1946. Their services²⁸ during the war were recognised by their contingents being included in the Victory Parade which was held in Delhi on March 7, 1946 and also in the Navy Day Parade in Bombay. All WRINS were later released by February 1947.

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7. Training

THAT THE MAN behind the machine is more important than the machine *per se* has perhaps been reduced to a cliché due to overuse but, nevertheless, it is a time-honoured cliché which will remain valid as long as man fights man, ashore or afloat, with weapons of war whose level of sophistication and lethality is growing menacingly.

The history of training activities in the RIN covering the period from 1939 to the early fifties is replete with a number of 'seamarks' and achievements which were catalysed by numerous important events in the prevailing politico-military scenario including developments during World War II, demobilisation after the War, partition of the country resulting in the sharing of assets and training facilities by the two truncated navies, and the need for creating a new complex of basic, advanced and technical training infrastructure in a phased manner based on the changed security environment, new threat perceptions and the emerging post-War role of the maritime forces.

In September 1939, the RIN had a handful of training establishments to cater to the needs of its small flotilla and these training establishments were all located inside the Naval Dockyard at Bombay. These establishments¹ were used for training ratings only and comprised a Seamanship School, a Signal School, a Gunnery School, a Mechanical Training Establishment, a Boys' Training Establishment and an Anti-Submarine School. They were manned by a small number of officers, warrant officers and ratings who carried out necessary administrative as well as instructional duties. There were no facilities at that time for training in the torpedo, radar and electrical disciplines nor was there any establishment for training officers who used to be sent to the U.K. for training in the Royal Naval Establishments. The rationale behind the concentration of naval establishments here appears to have been the fact that Bombay was the only port used for naval operations before the War.

[For purpose of training² boys, the floating hulk of *HMIS Dalhousie*, which used to be moored alongside the breakwater in the Bombay Dockyard, was used. *Dalhousie* also functioned as the parent establishment for all officers serving in Bombay.]

By the time, however, World War II ended several training establishments³ had sprung up all over the country. These were *HMIS Himalaya*, the Gunnery School, *HMIS Bahadur*, the Boys' Training Establishment, *HMIS Dila-*

war, and *HMIS Chamak*, the Radar Training School, and the Physical and Recreational Training School at Karachi; *HMIS Valsura*, the Torpedo School at Jamnagar; *HMIS Akbar* which housed the New Entry Ratings Training School, Officers' Training School and the Cookery School, *HMIS Feroze*, the Reserve Officers and WRINS Officers Training Establishment; *HMIS Talwar*, the Signal Training Establishment; *HMIS Khanjar*, the New Entry Ratings Training Establishment; *HMIS Hamalawar*, the RIN Component No. 1 Coastal Training Centre; *HMIS Machlimar*, the Anti-Submarine School, and the Fort Barracks Supply and Secretarial Training School at Bomoay; *HMIS Shivaji*, the Mechanical Training Establishment, and the RIN School of Photography at Lonavla; the Civilian/Naval Training Establishment at Pilani; *HMIS Cheetah*, the Motor Transport/Boat Training Base at Trombay; *HMIS Hamla*, the Landing Craft Wing Training School at Mandapam; *HMIS Jahannara* at Ahmednagar and *HMIS Nalini* at Calcutta, both training establishments for the Women's Royal Indian Naval Service; and *HMIS Jahangir*, the RIN Component No. 2 Coastal Training Centre at Kakinada (known as Conocada those days).

The Radar Training School, *HMIS Chamak*, was established at Karachi during the War and was found extremely useful in imparting training on the use of radar, the recently introduced long-range all-weather sensor.

The Mechanical Training Establishment, *HMIS Shivaji*, was commissioned⁴ at Lonavla on January 8, 1945 though the formal opening ceremony was performed by the Governor of Bombay over a month later on February 15, 1945. This establishment was planned to undertake the training of 720 ratings and had an administrative and training staff comprising 50 officers and 329 ratings.

Owing to the rapid expansion of the RIN and the great demand for engineer officers during this period, it became necessary to appoint newly-commissioned engineer officers to billets afloat as early as possible, i.e., after a brief exposure to training in basic and divisional duties. However, during the year 1945, the manpower position eased to some extent and the engineering syllabi for officers were revised to include additional topics such as discipline, anti-gas warfare, damage control, fire-fighting and electrical, ordnance and naval engineering as a part of the 24-week engineering course. Engineer officers who had joined the Service prior to 1944, were also deputed to undergo this course.

In February 1943, the Civilian and Military Training Centre at Pilani commenced the training of civilian personnel and prepared them for recruitment to the mechanical training establishment of the RIN as direct-entry artificers. As this arrangement did not prove satisfactory, it was decided in early 1944 to appoint a Lieutenant of the engineering branch as the officer-in-charge of this establishment and redesignate this establishment as a Civilian-Naval Centre. The Centre was placed under the administrative control of the Labour Department of the Government of India. The trainees were now enrolled in the service prior to their joining the Centre. This establishment was run like

any other naval establishment by providing the provost staff and other facilities. This change also led to the addition of an impetus in the recruitment of engineering personnel and subsequently the staff of the Centre was increased to three engineer officers, three executive branch officers, one supply officer and requisite provost staff and other ratings. The training capacity of the Centre was increased to take on the training of 280 trainees and the duration of the course was extended to six months.

The Fire-Fighting and Damage Control school was established at Colaba, Bombay and undertook training of all categories of personnel in the vital technique of countering emergencies at sea caused by fire and enemy action.

On the lines of the Anti-Submarine Establishment of the Royal Navy at Liverpool, an Anti-Submarine Tactical Teacher was set up at Bombay to train torpedo and anti-submarine (TAS) personnel in the ever-changing tactics against submarines. During periods when the ships awaited clearance for the departure of convoys from Bombay to other ports or areas of action across enemy-infested waters, the TAS personnel aboard were given a heavy dose of training in the latest techniques of underwater warfare.

In order to ensure better quality of officers and sailors, suitable personnel selection tests and other methods had also been devised and adopted. Updated syllabi for various courses had been drawn up and several new methods of training introduced. The training flotilla⁵ comprised *HMIS Cornwallis*, *Clive*, *Dipavati*, *Heera*, *Lal* and *Nilam* for new entry officers from *HMIS Akbar* and the converted survey ship, *HMIS Investigator* which had become a Boys' Training Ship. These measures considerably improved the quality of training and showed positive results within a short period.

To ensure that the right type of officers and ratings joined the Royal Indian Navy, a close liaison was maintained between Naval Headquarters and the Army's Directorate of Recruiting and Selection of Personnel. Furthermore, there was a distinct improvement in the quality of recruits on account of the introduction of Standard Literacy Tests which ensured uniformity in the standard of question papers and assessment norms. The syllabi were also constantly reviewed with a view to improving and modernising the training methodology and quality of training.

Training film strips and projectors were procured from the U.K. and the U.S.A. in order to render instruction more interesting, informative and effective. Some of these film strips were also dubbed in the Indian languages. A film "Naval Uniform" depicting the uniform of different ratings was also produced. Two other films, "Parts of a Ship" and "Anchors and Cables", were also produced in 1945. Stress was laid on the need to acquire a good knowledge of Urdu as several ratings were Urdu-speaking.

During this period, 11 ratings were granted commissions in the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve. Of these, seven were commissioned in the Executive branch, two in the Supply and Secretariat branch and one each in the Electrical and Engineering branches. These were the first commissions ever granted to the personnel from the lower deck—ratings, and marked an

important milestone in the history of the Royal Indian Navy. Their initial combined training of one month's duration was conducted at *HMIS Akbar* during which period they were also taught general seamanship and other disciplines. On completion of this combined training, the executive branch personnel stayed back at *HMIS Akbar* for a further 11-week training course while the others proceeded to their respective schools for professional training.

Some aspects of training had to be imparted in the U.K. as facilities for such training did not exist in India at that time. An Engineer Officer, for instance, was appointed to the Gunnery School at *HMIS Himalaya* and the qualitative requirement of his duties necessitated his being qualified in ordnance duties. As no RIN officer at that time was qualified in this discipline, two officers were deputed to undergo ordnance training in the U.K. in July 1944. On their return to India in January 1945, they were appointed to *HMIS Himalaya* and *HMIS Shivaji*.

During World War II and even later, a large number of the vessels depended wholly on the resources of the Dockyard at Bombay and hence it was felt necessary to continuously induct latest technology and hardware into the Dockyard. It was, therefore, decided in August 1944 to depute two officers to the U.K. to study dockyard organisation and other related aspects.

With a view to improving the training methodology at *HMIS Shivaji*, an Engineer Officer was deputed to the U.K. in September 1944 to study modern training methods with particular emphasis on the training of engine room and artificer apprentices.

During the 'forties', the Government of India had planned to induct cruisers and destroyers into the RIN and hence two officers from the Engineering branch were deputed for a six-month attachment with the East Indies Fleet in late 1944 so that they could, on their return, form a nucleus of engineer officers trained in the operation and maintenance of machinery and boilers of cruisers and destroyers. Four electrical artificers were also deputed to the U.K. for technical training in electrical equipment for which facilities did not exist in the RIN.

To broaden the base of educational training and methodology of training, an Instructor branch was constituted in August 1944. An Examination Office was established in Bombay to conduct the Higher Educational Test (HET) and Educational Test I (ET I) to assess the educational attainments of ratings for purposes of promotion to higher ranks. A series of lectures on training techniques were arranged for the lower-deck cadre of school-masters. Reference, unit and circulating libraries were also set up in the RIN training establishments by procuring publications locally and from the U.K. A degree in Mathematics or Physics had already been prescribed as an essential qualification for entry into the instructor branch and the pay scales of school-masters were suitably revised in October 1943. The ranks of Headmaster Commander, Headmaster Lieutenant Commander and Headmaster Lieutenant were introduced in the RIN. The Inter-Universities Board (India) further recommended

to all the universities in India that the HET examination be recognised as equivalent to the matriculation examination. The suggestion made by the Training and Education Directorate that navigation and meteorology should be introduced as a degree subject in Indian Universities was also accepted by the Inter-University Board. War information rooms became the responsibility of the Instructor Branch and photographs of RIN ships and naval activities of the Commonwealth countries were circulated to them for display. The responsibility for broadcasting the Forces' Programme over All India Radio also devolved on the Composite Training and Education Directorate.

For planning and coordination of all training activities, the Directorate of Training and Education was constituted on July 26, 1943 and comprised a Commodore of the Royal Navy as the Director of Training and Education and Inspector of Training Establishments, a Commander of the Royal Indian Naval Reserve as the Deputy Director of Training, a Headmaster-Commander of the Royal Navy as the Deputy Director of Education and five Lieutenant Commanders or Lieutenants of various branches—executive, engineering, accountant and instructor. This Directorate was further reorganised in October 1944 and its composition was revised to a Captain of the Royal Navy as the Director of Training and Education and Inspector of Training Establishments, a Commander of the Royal Navy as the Deputy Director of Training, an Instructor-Commander of the Royal Navy as the Deputy Director of Education, a Lieutenant of the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve as Staff Officer (Training) and an Instructor-Lieutenant Commander of the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve as Staff Officer (Education). The Training and Education Directorate, in order to optimise the quality of the trainees, worked in close liaison with all branches of the Service on all training matters. A little before Independence, i.e., on July 1, 1947, a Naval Sub-Committee⁶ was constituted to make recommendations regarding the division of assets and liabilities of the undivided Service between India and Pakistan. Based on the recommendations of this Committee, the Partition Council allocated ships to the two countries. As a result of this allocation, two sloops *Kisna* and *Cauvery*, as also the frigate *HMIS Tir*, came to the RIN to be used later as training ships.

An idea for joint training⁷ by the two navies after partition was propounded by Admiral Sir Geoffrey Miles, the then Deputy Supreme Commander (Navy) and earlier Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy of undivided India, to Mr. Jinnah three days before partition. Admiral Miles records to say, "Mr. Jinnah had arrived there (Karachi) the same day as Governor General Designate of Pakistan and he bid me to come to stay with him at Government House. That night at dinner with only himself and his sister Fatima I was propounding my idea that after partition the two new navies should share the various training establishments, for example, all the boys would be trained in *Bahadur* (Karachi) and on completion, all the Indian boys would be sent down to Bombay. Conversely, all engine room staff would be trained in *Shivaji* (Lonavla).

“‘You can’t do it Admiral’ said Mr. Jinnah. I said ‘Talking as an Englishman I can’t see . . .’ when Mr. Jinnah interrupted by thumping the table and saying ‘That’s your trouble, you talk as an Englishman.’ I said ‘allright, talking as an Admiral I can’t see why it can’t be done. We’ve had them mixed in ships for some years.’ ‘I’ll tell you why you can’t, said Mr. Jinnah, ‘they worship the cow, we eat it!’ A very succinct way of summing up the situation,” records Admiral Miles.

On January 1, 1948, the old Directorate of Training and Education⁸ was split into two separate directorates, namely, the Directorate of Weapons and Training and the Directorate of Naval Education. Partition of the country also led to the commencement of a search for suitable location for a Boys’ Training Establishment (BTE) in India. Prior to Independence, the Boy’s Training Centre for the Navy used to be at the two establishments, *HMIS Bahadur* and *HMIS Dilawar*, in Karachi. Immediately after Independence, a temporary training centre was set up at Bombay which was shifted to *INS Circars* in December 1947. The initial training of Stoker boys was undertaken at the new BTE in Vishakhapatnam in 1948 and the boys then proceeded to *HMIS Shivaji* for technical training. The training schools established⁹ at Cochin during the early forties were the Supply and Secretariat School, the Cookery School, the Communication School and the Anti-Submarine School where anti-submarine warfare courses for officers were started in March 1948.

In November 1947, a delegation visited the U.K. and made arrangements for 47 officers and 366 ratings to undergo various courses in the Royal Navy’s training establishments. Attachments to ships of the Royal Navy and Mediterranean Fleets for practical sea training were also arranged.

The proposed post-Independence expansion of the Royal Indian Navy necessitated augmentation of manpower resources and initiation of immediate action to step up recruitment. The officers and men so inducted into the Navy had to be given adequate training to enable them to discharge their duties and responsibilities, both afloat and ashore. This called for *ad hoc* arrangements as well as expansion of training facilities to meet the enhanced requirements. In the initial stages, the Royal Indian Navy had to depend considerably on the Royal Navy for specialised training of ratings as well as general and specialised training of officers.

Whilst in the pre-partition days the number of cadets to be entered every year was 24, the input of cadets during 1948 was increased to 46; it was accepted in principle that the input for the years 1949 and 1950 would be 46 and 47 respectively.

The planned cadet entry scheme catered only for offsetting normal wastages on account of retirement. To build up the officer cadre of the Navy for her expansion, recourse to direct recruitment was the only plausible solution and hence this was accepted for all branches of the RIN for an initial period of two years. To make up the shortage of officers in different branches of the RIN, a scheme of short-service commission¹⁰ of seven years’ duration was introduced and 67 officers were granted commissions during the period from

August 1949. Out of these, 55 joined the executive branch, 7 joined the engineering branch and five were sent to the electrical branch. In addition, 15 released officers were recalled and granted special five-year short service commission in the Royal Indian Navy. In order to further indigenise training of officers, an Inter-Service training institution, the National Defence Academy, came into being in January 1949. Thirty-eight Royal Indian Naval Cadets joined the Naval Wing of the Academy and completed their training in 1951. On passing out from the Academy, they were sent to the U.K., like other RIN cadets before them, for further training.

To meet shortages in manpower, both in training and administrative spheres, 88 commissioned officers and 61 warrant officers from all branches of the RN were loaned to the RIN as a stop-gap arrangement.

Several new courses were introduced. In order to implement basic, advanced and operational training, three new courses, viz., senior officers' refresher course, junior officer's refresher course and small ships gunnery officers' courses were instituted at Cochin during 1951-52. In February 1953, the first long physical training course for naval officers was undertaken in India at the Army School of Physical Training, Pune.

An added commitment for the training of National Cadet Corps officers of the Naval Wing of both senior and junior divisions was also undertaken by the Navy in 1951. The Atomic, Bacteriological and Chemical Damage Control School (ABCD School) was set up at *INS Shivaji* and training in techniques of ABC warfare was introduced.

Training activities for ratings were also stepped up, syllabi revised and several new courses introduced. Five hundred and eight ratings were deputed to the U.K. between December 1947 and May 1948 to undergo various courses and attachments in the RN. The majority of ratings of this group were earmarked for the first cruiser being acquired for the RIN, *HMIS Delhi* and, after completion of their courses, they were 'drafted' to the ship.

The Dockyard Apprenticeship Scheme¹¹ was introduced for the training of civilian trade apprentices in order to provide the Naval Dockyard and Base Repair Organisations with technicians for the highly specialised and skilled jobs.

In April 1952, it was decided that the Boatswains training course should also be conducted in India. The first course commenced at Cochin in February 1953.

Several courses for professional training of ratings of different disciplines were also completed. It was expected at that time that more specialist courses for the ratings' first and second rates could be undertaken in India once the necessary equipment from the U.K. had been installed in various training schools.

On the basis of the recommendations made by the Training Finance Committee, construction of buildings¹² for a number of training schools for the Navy was approved by the Government of India. These were the Torpedo, Anti-Submarine School and Navigation School at Cochin and the Electrical

School at Jamnagar to be built at a cost of Rs. 95 lakhs and the Gunnery School at Cochin to be built at a cost of Rs. 80 lakhs. Plans for future development of the training schools—basic, advanced and technical—were also formulated and finalised. Construction of a swimming pool at Bombay for training in swimming and life-saving was also approved. *HMIS Tir* was converted into a training frigate for the sea training of cadets and midshipmen.

On January 15, 1949, Naval Headquarters was reorganised into five main branches¹³, each headed by a Principal Staff Officer: Staff Branch, Personnel Branch, Administration Branch, Material Branch and Naval Aviation Branch. The Directorate of Training formed part of the Personnel Branch.

From November 1, 1952, the appointment of the Commodore Superintendent, Indian Naval Training Establishments, who supervised all training activities in the Navy's training schools, was abolished and a full-fledged Director of Naval Training was appointed to carry out, *inter alia*, all functions hitherto assigned to the Commodore Superintendent.

The three major naval stations in the country, Bombay, Cochin and Visakhapatnam, have played a significant role in the development and evolution of naval training.

Until the outbreak of World War II, most of the training establishments of the RIN were located in Bombay.

The administration of the Naval Barracks, various schools, wireless stations and training establishments was at that time the responsibility of the Commanding Officer, RIN Depot while the Naval Dockyard was controlled by the Captain Superintendent of the Dockyard.

The role played by the naval establishments in Cochin, both in operations and training, was equally significant. The defence requirement of India as a whole had been reviewed by the Chatfield Committee by about 1935 and this Committee had recommended the adoption of a nine-year plan for the development of depots, training establishments and local naval defence equipment. Consequent to the recommendations of this Committee, it was decided to develop Cochin into a Naval Base. Implementation of this decision was further hastened on the eve of World War II and on August 31, 1939, a few days before the outbreak of the War, a small naval base was established in Cochin under Captain L. Wadeson of the Royal Indian Navy as the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Cochin.

Originally this establishment was called a Local Naval Defence (LND) Base and was made responsible for the operation and manning of the local Port Wireless Signal Station. There were about 20 officers and 50 ratings for wireless communication and the Examination Service Committee. The ratings were accommodated in a barracks in Venduruthy which was earlier used as a post office while most of the officers were accommodated in Cochin Club at Fort Cochin.

By the end of 1940, 50 acres of land extending from the Malabar Gate to the Old Cinema Gate on Willingdon Island was acquired from the Port Authority. Construction of buildings and a jetty and the installation of a

crane were taken up. Meanwhile, work on the project of establishing a large Royal Naval Landing Craft Base at Cochin also commenced by 1942. Owing to paucity of office accommodation, the ground floor of Malabar Hotel's Eastern Wing was requisitioned for use as naval offices around the middle of 1941. During the same year, a Sea Transport Organisation and Embarkation Headquarters were also established at Cochin. The permanent naval base under construction had been named 'Venduruthy' and the barracks occupied by ratings at Fort Cochin christened Venduruthy II. This establishment was finally commissioned as *HMIS Venduruthy* on June 24, 1943. All the naval offices, units and ratings in Venduruthy II moved to this new establishment. The naval base by then had become a large establishment with approximately 5,000 ratings. An airport was constructed in 1943 to meet the operational requirements of the 312 MURAF (Maintenance Unit of the Royal Air Force), as also the requirements of civil defence.

In June 1946, the requirements of World War II having already been met, a decision was taken to decommission the Royal Naval Air Station Chinkara (RNAS Chinkara) and also to reduce *HMIS Venduruthy* to a considerable extent. The Royal Naval Establishment completed the winding up process by about August 1946. The Royal Indian Navy also started the reduction process by discharging civilian employees who had been engaged on a temporary basis and withdrawing personnel from Cochin to the home base at Bombay.

With Independence in August 1947, it was decided to once again expand the naval base at Cochin. As some of the training schools had gone to Pakistan, corresponding training facilities had to be created in India. Cochin was chosen as the appropriate site for the purpose. The buildings vacated by *RNAS Chinkara* were earmarked for housing the training schools as a temporary measure. A new Signal School was set up at Cochin towards the end of 1946 in view of *HMIS Talwar*¹⁴ having paid off in August 1946 in Bombay. In January 1947, Captain M.H. St. L. Nott, RIN, took over as Naval Officer-in-Charge, Cochin. After a detailed review of the facilities available at Cochin and its potential for playing the role of a premier training establishment for the Indian Navy, Captain Nott strongly urged the Government to initiate measures for the development and expansion of the naval base. In addition to these schools, the Navigation and Direction School, the new Naval Seamanship School and a new Gunnery School were also set up.

Since the majority of Indian naval training schools were now located in *HMIS Venduruthy*, Cochin, it was decided to upgrade the status of the naval authority at Cochin to that of a Superintendent of Indian Naval Training Establishments. In August 1948, the Commodore-in-Charge, Cochin also became the Commodore Superintendent of Training, Royal Indian Navy.

Under the command of Commodore H.B. Ellison, D.S.O., RN, who assumed command¹⁵ on August 1, 1948, the Cochin base developed rapidly. In 1951, a decision was taken to build permanent buildings for all training schools and offices in the Naval Base. This work was to be completed in four or five phases.

A naval base was first opened at Vishakhapatnam during World War II on December 12, 1939. The office of the Senior Naval Officer, Vishakhapatnam was then located in a small building next to the old Harbour Dispensary. The area under the administrative control of Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vishakhapatnam then extended from Port Baruve in the North to Port Vadreva in the South.

The necessity to have naval control on merchant shipping and to have an operational and repair naval base on the East Coast of India was the primary consideration in commissioning the naval base. As a result, *HMIS Circars* came into being as a refitting and operational establishment in April 1942. Incidentally, it was in this year that the naval base and Vishakhapatnam harbour were bombed by Japanese aircraft but the damage suffered was negligible.

The enormous impetus of the war effort necessitated the development of Vishakhapatnam as an advance base and accordingly the facilities at this port were extended to meet the entire needs of the 14th Army in Burma by the establishment of a vast area for storing ammunition. This was known in those days as the Ordnance Export Transit Depot. The same place is now known as the Naval Armament Depot and is situated about six miles from the harbour. There used to be a Royal Naval Base as Royal Naval Establishment Amzari from 1943 to 1945 in the area now called the C.M.H. Area. This was closed down during the first quarter of 1946. To meet the needs of naval and merchant ships, an oil jetty was erected near the northwestern arm of the harbour.

It was in 1943 that the Supreme Command established this port as an advance base for Coastal Forces. Small craft belonging to the allied navies used to assemble at Vishakhapatnam and work up during the monsoon season with the ultimate object of proceeding to Burma around October every year. This state of affairs existed from early 1943 to the end of the War. The Naval Officer-in-Charge had an overall control of all shipping operated from this port but the Coastal Forces had their own operational commander who was known as the Captain, Coastal Forces.

By the end of 1945, the need for Coastal Forces no longer existed and the small craft which had already assembled alongside the naval jetty in *HMIS Circars* were engaged for duties in the Navy, and the rest were disposed of. *HMIS Circars* then became a small operational and maintenance base catering to the needs of naval ships which visited the East Coast. The establishment was extremely small and consisted of about a dozen officers and 200 men. *Circars*, however, was a separate entity under the jurisdiction of the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vishakhapatnam. This officer, who was of the rank of Captain, held the operational command of all the waters between the East Coast of India and the West Coast of Burma. His jurisdiction extended right from Kanyakumari along the Eastern seaboard to the tip of Sumatra.

India had to establish a Boys' Training Establishment of its own, the one existing before partition at Karachi having been assigned to Pakistan. Initially

commissioned as *HMIS Akbar* at Bombay, the Boys' Training Establishment was subsequently moved to *HMIS Circars* in Vishakhapatnam in December 1947. It was, however, agreed that the site was not suitable to house the Boys' Training Establishment permanently for several reasons including proposals for utilisation of the area for future expansion of the Scindia Shipyard (now Hindustan Shipyard) and basing of the headquarters of a naval command on the East Coast.

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8. Naval Aviation

IN NOVEMBER 1910, the first ever aircraft¹ to take off from a ship's deck was launched in Chesapeake Bay from the scout cruiser *USS Birmingham*. The first ever landing at sea took place on an improvised flight deck built over a turret on board the armoured cruiser *USS Pennsylvania* on January 18, 1911. In 1912, the navies of the United States and the United Kingdom acquired their first aircraft and thus was added the third dimension to operations at sea by the navies of the world. This also signified the transfer of the role of reconnaissance picket at sea from the scout frigates and scout cruisers to the air-borne 'eyes of the fleet'.

During the earlier years of the 1914-18 War, warships carrying seaplanes could only launch them from the deck and recover them by using cranes after they had landed on the sea-surface. These were amphibian aircraft capable of landing on water or a runway. Within a short period of their introduction, these aircraft assumed an offensive role and started carrying torpedoes and bombs for use against enemy submarines, ships and shore targets.

The first ship designed to launch and land aircraft at sea, i.e., the first carrier, as this class of ships is now known, was the British passenger liner, *HMS Argus*, which was converted for the purpose and equipped with the world's first flush-deck, a flat deck without any superstructure. This innovation, in its wake, brought in the development of high-velocity, rapid-fire, high-angle anti-aircraft naval guns and some new classes of smaller ships designed for the anti-aircraft role, in addition to other roles such as destroyers and torpedo boats.

The first World War saw fairly extensive use of ship-borne aircraft. These planes were used for air reconnaissance, carrying out attacks on ships, submarines and shore bases and for protection of fleets from air attacks.

The intervening years between the two World Wars helped in realising the potential² of the 'floating airfields' and provided a spurt in building aircraft carriers by many countries. The first such ship, designed and built as an aircraft carrier, was *HMS Hermes* which was launched in 1919. It was during the third decade of this century, however, that the Japanese, British and the Americans developed the techniques of all-weather landing and take-off of carrier-borne aircraft. The 'island', i.e., the superstructure housing the bridge for navigation and command, was added. Battleships and cruisers also carried aircraft which were used for scouting and spotting—providing

visual guidance to friendly ships' armament in bringing their fire to bear on the enemy's ships or shore installations.

During the Second World War, aircraft carriers played a significant role in the operations at sea around the globe. The near annihilation of the U.S. naval ships, carriers and shore establishments in Pearl Harbour by the Japanese carrier-based task force, the Battle of the Coral Sea in which the opposing fleets fought without sighting each other on the surface, the first ever such operation at sea, the Battle of Midway, the Allied carrier operations against the Japanese homeland and the British operations in the Mediterranean, as the Encyclopaedia Britannica put it, "reinforced a conviction already clear... that modern sea power is a trident of air, surface and undersea forces."

Further development of all-weather take-off and landing facilities on aircraft carriers continued after World War II and soon British designers introduced the angled deck and the steam catapult and carriers built the world over had longer and stronger flight-decks and considerably larger number of aircraft, faster and better-armed, carried on board.

The growing realisation of the potential of the air element at sea led the authorities in India to depute a Royal Indian Navy Officer, Lt. Y.N. Singh—India's first naval pilot—to the United Kingdom in 1941 for basic training and later to Canada where he obtained his 'wings' in 1944 before serving in escort carriers of the Royal Navy until the end of the war.

Between V.J. Day and our Independence, however, there was no air element in the Royal Indian Navy. With the partition³ of the subcontinent and the consequent division of the Royal Indian Navy, roughly a third of its fleet along with many shore establishments in Karachi went to Pakistan. Lord Louis Mountbatten, who had played a significant role in the Burma Operations during World War II and who was the first Governor-General of independent India, supported the view⁴ of the Government of India that in order to ensure full freedom of the seas for Indian shipping in the waters around this country, its naval strength should be sufficiently built up and ships modernised on the basis of the emerging concepts of the war at sea. In accordance with an official directive received for the purpose from the Government and under the direction of Vice Admiral Sir Edward Parry, the then Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Indian Navy, Naval Headquarters drew up to a 10-year naval expansion plan late on 1947.

While preparing the plan, adequate weightage was given to the perception of possible threats from the sea during the next two or three decades. The plan proposed the gradual expansion of the Indian Navy and the development of suitable task forces to be formed around two light fleet carriers with sufficiently large support fleets comprising light cruisers, destroyers and ancillary support vessels. In deference to the national policy, the Navy was assigned a defensive role with adequate provision for rapid expansion and switching over to an offensive role if called upon to wear such a mantle. In March 1949, the wartime roles of the Navy were defined as protection of

our sea lanes and denial of the same to the enemy, protection of merchant convoys, provision of assistance and facilities to the Indian Army for combined (amphibious) operations and offensive operations against the enemy's ships, submarines, ports, harbours and installations.

With Captain H.C. Ranalds, O.B.E. of the RN on loan service to the RIN at its head, a Directorate of Naval Aviation⁵ was set up at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi in 1948. Since the RN did not spare any naval aircraft for transfer to the RIN at that time and since no aircraft carrier was available, it was decided to look elsewhere for the aircraft and, when these were acquired, to set up a shore-based nucleus of a naval aviation unit with provision for future expansion. This was provided for in the Defence Budget for 1949-50. At that time it was also decided that the first aircraft carrier would be acquired by 1955 with another following within the next two years. The inventory of naval aircraft to be acquired by the Navy was expected to grow to 300 fighter, strike and anti-submarine aircraft by 1957. Out of these, 54 were to be carrier-borne and the rest used ashore as trainers, reserves and for shore-based operations. The primary shore-based strike aircraft was going to be the Seafury FB 11 and 40 aircraft of this type were to be acquired by 1950.

Before, however, an attempt could be made to convert the plans into reality, certain extraneous factors such as the Berlin blockade and the prolonged war in Korea put paid to the aspirations of the pioneers of our flying branch. The changed international situation also altered the order of priorities of the major naval powers and an element of uncertainty was introduced to the availability of ships and aircraft for the Navy's Air Arm.

During 1948, however, 13 officers were selected for preliminary flying aptitude screening and reported to the IAF Station at Jodhpur in January 1949 for training. Out of the 13 officers who undertook training at Jodhpur, 10 were selected for training with the RN in the U.K. These were: Lieutenants H.K. Mukherji, A.S. Bathena, K. Cockburn, M.M. Bakshi, R.S. Sokhi, P.N. Parashar, T. Chakraverti, P.C. Rajkhown, G.C. D'Cruz and B.D. Law.

The ten young fliers left for the U.K. amid much fanfare and with great expectations. They began their preliminary flying training at Royal Naval Air Station, Donibristle in Scotland and seven of them then proceeded to RAF Station Syerston for further training. Only five were, however, awarded 'wings' and sent to Royal Naval Air Station, Lossiemouth for operational training—Bakshi, Chakraverti and Sokhi for specialising in anti-submarine operations and Law and Parashar in fighter operations. At Jodhpur these officers had flown Tiger Moths, Prentices and Harvards at Syerston and at Lossiemouth they were flying Fireflies and Seafires.

It was at this stage that the Navy lost its first pilot. Bakshi died in a Firefly crash while on a low-level sortie.

By this time, only four pilots were left—Sokhi, Parashar, Chakraverti and Law. Out of these, Parashar and Law were sent to the 781 Communication Squadron and Sokhi and Chakraverti to the 771 Fleet Requirement Squadron at Lee-on-Solent for further training.

The Government was aware of the need for developing a strong Fleet Air Arm at this time. And in the meeting of the Defence Minister's Committee (Navy) held on October 26, 1949, the need for a Fleet Air Arm was accepted and the proposal for its formation was passed by the Standing Committee for Parliament on November 13, 1950. The proposal envisaged training of pilots for the Fleet Requirement Unit initially in India and then in the U.K., training of Naval Aviation Observers, Air Traffic Control Officers and Aircraft Engineering Officers at the Royal Navy's aviation and technical institutions, conversion of suitable ratings into Naval Airmen (Aircraft Handlers), Naval Airmen (Safety Equipment), Naval Airmen (Photographers), Aircraft Artificers, Electrical Artificers, Radio Electrical Artificers, Aircraft maintenance personnel and Aircraft stores personnel, and the setting up of a School for Aircraft Handling and Fire Fighting at Cochin.

At this stage, however, there was a reappraisal of the nation's finances leading to the imposition of extreme budgetary stringency which immediately affected the Navy's plan for acquiring an Air Arm. The entire naval expansion programme was slashed down to a minimal rate of development. It was decided to reduce the proposed fleet strength to a small carrier force with the primary task of anti-submarine warfare to be developed around only one aircraft carrier. Further reduction in the plans was imposed in September 1950 when the Government decided on the development of only a Fleet Requirement Unit⁶ with 12 aircraft. These were to be of two types instead of four as originally planned and would consist of three Hawker Fury FB Mark XI single-seater fighter aircraft (capable of towing sleeve targets) and three Short Sealand Amphibians together with 100 per cent reserve aircraft of each type. The plan also included the provision of Air Sea Rescue facilities. The existing airfield at Cochin was also to be resuscitated on an austerity basis.

At the height of the Fleet Air Arm's development enthusiasm, the authorities, in their efforts to ensure its rapid expansion, had prepared themselves to recruit civilian pilots and request the Air Force to transfer some volunteer pilots to the Navy. Two engineers from the Royal Indian Air Force had been sent to the U.K. for conversion and one was attending an advanced air engineering course. Lieutenant Commander G. Douglas, who had distinguished himself and was decorated during World War II with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm, was granted a permanent commission in the Indian Navy. The stage was thus set for an "Overture" in the developmental process of our naval aviation to develop into the strident notes of a crescendo when the sounding of a premature finale caught the naval planners unawares and the Navy had to satisfy itself with a mere Fleet Requirement Unit.

Twenty-five Engine Room Artificers⁷ were deputed to the United Kingdom in 1949 for the Aircraft Artificers' Conversion Course and 24 successfully completed the first part of their training at the Royal Naval Air Station, Arbroath and then underwent a series of postgraduate specialist courses and manufacturers' courses on the types of aircraft that the Indian Navy was to acquire.

The proposal for establishing a School of Aircraft Maintenance at Cochin was suspended in September 1950 as the Admiralty had agreed to train our aircraft maintenance personnel at the RN aircraft maintenance training establishment in the United Kingdom.

The sailors deputed to the United Kingdom in 1950 for a course in Air Stores successfully completed their training and returned to India by the end of 1950 and were employed at Cochin for taking over surplus IAF equipment from the 312 Maintenance Unit, Cochin.

Flying over the sea has always been an exacting and demanding task. There are no bridges, rail and road crossings, nor any other landmarks to determine the aircraft's exact position. In bad visibility, the sea and the sky merge to form a light grey bowl with no dividing lines or references. Training for such flying requires dedication and constant application and cannot be taken for granted. Every aircraft arrest on the deck of a carrier or a helicopter touch-down on a small frigate in heavy seas is a controlled crash-landing executed with precision and concentration. Hovering 40 feet above the water whilst searching for a submarine on a dark night is equally demanding.

While viewing these developments in the proper perspective after the lapse of over three decades, one cannot help recording that the sudden curtailment of the naval budget in 1950 and the consequent delay in developing the third dimension for the Navy was caused not so much by financial constraints as the lack of proper appreciation of its potential for national defence. The contribution it could have made towards supplementing the operations that took place during the succeeding decades, can be better appreciated today.

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9. The Navy's Feathered Air Wing

UNDOUBTEDLY, efficient communication directly contributes to success of combat at sea. Given here is a brief historical background to an interesting aspect of this line of communication.

The youth of today's technically-oriented world might find it interesting to know that during World War II, the RIN made extensive use of pigeons for conveying messages from ships to shore.

Although the art of training pigeons as message carriers had been developed centuries ago, the RIN actually inherited it from the RN where pigeons had been in use since the last decade of the 19th century.

The first ever message¹ carried by the birds in the RN was in reference to a shell which had been accidentally fired through the stern of a ship, *Nettle*. Thereafter, pigeons were being continuously used for carrying messages from ships in the English Channel. By 1896, the British Admiralty had decided to make pigeon mail a regular feature of naval communications and intelligence.

On the Indian scene, young Boman Kaikashroo Shroff,² a pigeon fancier of Bombay, joined the RIN on March 24, 1938 in the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RINVR). Even before he joined, well before the outbreak of the War, Vice Admiral Sir Herbert Fitzherbert, the then Flag Officer Commanding the Royal Indian Navy, was examining the possibility of establishing a pigeon mail service at Bombay.³ Lieutenant Shroff was appointed Officer-in-Charge, Naval Carrier Pigeons, and in due course started operating his pigeon mail from an office located near Lion Gate, Bombay.

In the beginning, Shroff had only 20 to 30 of his own birds, which he presented to the Navy. He used to train the birds by taking them outside the harbour in a Naval launch through a mineswept channel and release them for experimental purposes. Once the birds proved useful in Bombay, the pigeon mail service was also established in Vishakhapatnam, Calcutta, Madras, Karachi and Cochin.

Cadet D.R. Mehta (who became Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff, incharge of Naval Aviation before his retirement in December 1972) reminisces, 'Visitors to the imposing RIN Officers' Mess on Apollo Street in Bombay during the late summer of 1939 wondered why a tall pigeon coop, of all things, stood adjacent to the flag staff on the front lawn. The feathered occupants of these coops were in fact the Fleet Air Arm of the RIN, under the command of Sub-

Lieutenant B.K. Shroff of the RINVR, an expert on carrier-pigeons better known those days as Pigeon Shroff.

‘On the morning of Tuesday, September 5, 1939, *HMIS Pathan* (later sunk), which was commanded by Lieutenant H.J.D. Hamilton, RIN, cast off from the Naval Jetty at the Bombay Dockyard and sailed on her first war patrol. She was the fastest ship in the Navy, having been built during World War I as a ship, i.e., a naval vessel disguised as a merchant ship to deceive and destroy enemy submarines. Among her complement of officers was Sub-Lieutenant Shroff, with a precious crate containing the Ship’s ‘Carrier Air Group’. To assist him was Naval Cadet D.R. Mehta, then awaiting passage to England for training and about to get his sea-legs on this, his first voyage. On clearing harbour, the single four-inch quick-firing gun was manned and the little asdic set (submarine detection equipment) commenced pinging. The idea of carrying pigeons in patrol vessels and local naval defence vessels, to avoid the breaking of wireless silence at sea, was being given its first trial in the RIN.

‘On clearing Bombay Floating Light, *Pathan* launched her first flight of two pigeons, each carrying a message capsule lovingly and tenderly strapped to one leg by Sub-Lieutenant Shroff. They rose and circled the ship and then flew off happily and unerringly in the direction of Bombay. Two hours later, came a wireless message from Naval Headquarters (then in Bombay and housed in a small two-storeyed building which stood where Lion Gate now stands) that the flight had landed safely. A second flight was launched, with equally successful results. With this, the complement of pigeons aboard was exhausted. *Pathan* returned from her patrol on September 10 and a debriefing of the flight was held.’⁴

As regards Bombay, the radius of local naval defence vessels, during the war, used to be 40 to 50 miles, a distance very comfortably and swiftly negotiated by the birds. Occasionally, the birds even flew up to 100 miles. Shroff maintained that the distance could be increased to thousands of miles, the only limitation being the inability of pigeons to fly by night.

Shroff or his men used to carry the pigeons in baskets and release them from the ship’s deck. To ensure the safe arrival of the message, two birds were released at the same time carrying the same message. The number of messages lost was negligible but the number of birds lost was higher as they became prey to hawks and other predatory birds.

Shroff was released from the service at his own request when hostilities ended in August 1945 and was made an honorary Lieutenant Commander. In 1941 he published a 66-page book aptly titled *India’s Other Air Force*. He recalls that at the height of the RIN’s pigeon activity, the total number of birds at various naval stations was around 2,000. Birds had to be bred locally because if they were taken from Bombay, they would, when released, fly back to Bombay and not to the station to which they were assigned.

Lieutenant Commander Shroff, who is now in his late seventies, resides at Pune. He still waxes eloquence on his ‘feathered friends’. An article,

“Postal Delivery System by Pigeons—Novel Scheme in Aid of Navy War Fund”,⁵ published in the *Times of India* on April 8, 1941, accorded due recognition to the services rendered by our feathered communicators. In a ceremony, 250 carrier pigeons of the Royal Indian Navy were flown from Kalyan to Bombay with copies of a message from the Governor of Bombay (Lord Brabourne) to the Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy. The amount realised from the sale of the messages (Rs. 4,000) was donated to the “Royal Indian Navy War Purposes Fund”. Commemorative envelopes bearing specially designed postage stamps, duly approved by the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs, were offered for sale to the public for Rs. 2 each.

The secret behind the homing techniques used by birds is still not understood. Whether there is some kind of computerised memory, as is used in cruise missiles or whether their navigational technique is magnetic, stellar, gravitational, inertial or lunar is yet to be figured out by scientists. But Shroff feels that pigeons home on to their perches by using landmarks and that is why, while they are trained as carrier pigeons, the homing range is increased in stages so that the details of the landmarks are effectively recorded in their memory. As he says, “If pigeons are flying from Pune to Bombay, they wouldn’t make a bee-line for Bombay because they can’t see a place which is 120 miles away. But if important landmarks such as hill ranges, tall trees, lakes, towers, buildings, etc., are already registered in their minds, they would cover the distance by flying from landmark to landmark. Besides, if the landmarks are registered in their memory well, they would make good speed too.”

In this context, a press release in the *Telegraph* of Calcutta dated September 8, 1983 is of interest. It states, “The carrier pigeon is still holding its own in Orissa in this age of satellite communication. For 37 years these birds have provided trouble-free service in a state fragmented by streams, hills and primeval forests.”⁶ It is stated that over a 1,000 pigeons have provided ‘the most reliable’ service in all 13 districts of the state. The service was first introduced on an experimental basis in Koraput district. The success of the Orissa pigeons has attracted attention to this mode of communication in other parts of the country and the Government of Gujarat is planning to establish a service in the Saurashtra region after the recent floods which disrupted telecommunication links. It is also stated that the Madhya Pradesh Police deployed pigeons during anti-dacoit campaigns in the Chambal valley.

Today’s communicators ensconced as they are in their signal centres maintaining wireless contact with all corners of the globe with the help of high power transmitters, satellites, lasers and other modern facilities, might scoff at the use of pigeons for communication at barely over-the-horizon ranges and dismiss it as something ancient, redundant, or obsolete but the zeal and application with which Lieutenant Shroff and other pigeon operators handled their winged messengers needs to be appreciated in the context of the absence of any other effective and reliable ship-shore communication facility during the thirties and the early forties.

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10. Hydrography

THE PEOPLE of the pre-Aryan era in India¹ used to navigate the sea and had trade relations with adjacent countries, had charts according to both the Pauranic system and the astronomers. The navigators needed charts for sailing the shortest and best possible way in the shortest time.

Probing² unknown depths has been the mission of hydrographers for centuries, so that every hidden danger beneath the surface of the sea, could be revealed and navigation made safer for mariners of the world. All the information so laboriously and systematically collected by the surveyor is continuously published in the form of navigational charts and nautical publications that are available for mariners to use, so that they may sail the seas with confidence and trust.

Maritime charts are useful not only for navigation but also for exploration of marine resources and to study oceanographic properties. The early explorers³ embarked on a charting programme extending from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, along the Arabian coast, the Indian subcontinent, right up to the China Sea. During the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, these activities were undertaken by the East India Company. The sea captains of the company with their careful observations provided valuable information for the construction of the early charts. These charts together with Sailing Directions were condensed into "Rules of our East India Company" by John Davis, the famous explorer and navigator. However, Captain John Ritchie was the first Head of the Marine Survey Department. He was appointed Hydrographer to the East India Company in 1770. He surveyed the mouth of Hooghly River, explored the Coast of Bengal and Burma and made some investigations in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. However, credit for the first systematic surveys of the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal goes to Lieutenant Archibald Blair. It is in recognition of his excellent work that the principal port of the Islands is named after him.

The East India Company took an active interest in charting the ocean from the early 17th century and ensured a quality control in the preparation of nautical charts. The interest taken by the Company is evident from the instructions issued to Captain John McCluer, one of the pioneers, when he, in 1787, commenced systematic surveys of the west coast of India. It said "Let what is done be done completely and nothing left undetermined in this space; if any doubt arises, let observations be repeated in such parts, that an

implicit confidence may be placed in the work when finished."⁴ The surveys were started at Bombay and operations extended southward as far as Cape Comorin; northward, these were extended to the Gulf of Cambay. McCluer also made one of the earliest plans of Bombay Harbour. The accuracy with which he surveyed the coast of India, entitled his work to be regarded as amongst the best charting operations undertaken in these waters.

Captain Daniel Ross known as the Father of Indian Surveys was indeed responsible for introducing scientific methods of surveying. He based his survey work on trigonometric control. His triangulation was often verified by astronomical observation. These surveys, though made more than a century and a half ago, with inferior and primitive instruments, using tiny ships and at a time when the science of hydrography was in its infancy, show great accuracy and attention to details.

However, from 1862 onwards, the Surveying Service and the Department went through a period of inactivity until 1874, when Captain Dundas Taylor assumed the post of Superintendent of Indian Marine Survey Department. Under Taylor's charge, a cartographic office was established at Calcutta where compilation of charts, Sailing Directions and Light Lists was undertaken. This formed the commencement of organised chart production. The Department, during the course of the last century, charted the waters of the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal extending from the Red Sea to the Straits of Malacca.

In the early centuries sailing vessels were used for conducting surveys. The change from sail to steam and from wood to steel made an immense difference in the speed and capabilities of survey ships. The most famous name in the annals of Indian hydrographic survey is that of the ship⁵ *Investigator*, the first 450-ton sailing vessel. *Investigator* was commanded by Captain Daniel Ross and was employed in the China Sea until she was paid off in 1828. The second *Investigator* was a wooden paddle steamer with a 581-ton displacement, built in the Bombay Dockyard in 1881. The third ship to bear the name was a steel single-screw ship commissioned in 1907. She was employed continuously as a survey vessel until 1932 when she was replaced by a fourth ship of the same name, a converted cable-laying vessel, the *Patrick Stewart*. On September 3, 1939 when war was declared against Germany, one 12-pounder gun, three depth charge shoots, one PN 123 Asdic Dome and a compass were fitted on board the *Investigator* at the Bombay Dockyard. In record time, the ship was painted dark grey, completed her gun, engine and asdic trials, and proceeded to Calcutta in the third degree of readiness. On arrival in Calcutta on September 17, 1939, the ship was placed under the orders of the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Calcutta as an anti-submarine vessel and was actively engaged in the War thereafter.

The history of nautical cartography, whose development kept pace with that of hydrographic survey technology, can be broadly divided into four stages:⁶ the first covered the depiction of emerging coastlines including earlier maps, charts and plans by the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and the British

East India Company followed by a charting of the oceans by the British East India Company and its hydrographic organisation between 1742 and 1861. The Marine Survey of India continued the charting activities from 1874 to 1947; survey commitments⁷ of Khor Abdulla and Diego Garcia were undertaken in 1941-42 and surveys of Salaya Harbour, Pathfinder Inlet, Rozi, Sikka, Kari Creek, Cox's Bazar, Versova Creek, Manori Creek and Mandapam Anchorage were completed in 1943. Thereafter, and until the end of the War, marine survey progressively reduced until it virtually faded out.

The post-Independence period saw the consolidation of hydrographic activities and the Marine Survey Department faced the important task of complete reorientation, reorganisation and reconstruction. Though it consisted of a small fleet and limited facilities and manpower, it completed the survey of Ormara East Bay, Bombay Naval Anchorage, Sacramento Shoal and the Cochin Naval Jetty during 1947-48. It was at this stage that the requirement for an independent Survey Organisation was considered imperative to chart the vast Indian Peninsula and hence a full-fledged Hydrographic Department for the Indian Navy was envisaged in 1948 along with the expansion and reorganisation of the Navy.

The case for further expansion⁸ of Marine Surveying was taken up in 1949 which brought out the following facts: "At present, India has only one very old survey vessel which will be replaced in the near future by a frigate converted for the purpose. She is assisted in her surveying duties by one Seaward Defence Motor Launch (SDML). These vessels are totally inadequate to cope with the rapidly increasing demands now being received largely due to the development of the various ports on the Coast of India." Furthermore, it was proposed that India should have her own hydrographic office that would eventually be capable of producing all the charts of the Indian Coast and certain special charts such as Lattice Charts, Bombardment Bases, Fleet Anchorages, Instructional Charts for training and various diagrammatic charts designed to facilitate the solution of navigational and surveying problems.

In April 1949, Commander J. Cursetji (later Admiral and Chief of the Naval Staff, 1976-1979) was deputed to the United Kingdom to plan and report⁹ upon the establishment of a Hydrographic Office in India. He returned to India in early 1950 with the necessary data, and after visiting some establishments in India, submitted his report in August 1950 to Naval Headquarters on the planning of the Hydrographic Office. He was the first Indian Surveyor later to become Surveyor-in-Charge, Marine Survey of India from 1951 to 1953. He was also the first to hold the appointment of Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India from 1955-1957.

Meanwhile, the surveys⁹ of Bhatkal, Malpe, Mangalore and Kandla Bar were completed in 1949. However, a detailed survey of Kandla and its approaches commenced on October 5, 1949. The Hydrographic Survey of Kandla and its approaches was carried out simultaneously with a number of surveys and investigation in the same area as part of the project of develop-

ment of Kandla as a major port. From the hydrographic point of view the most important of these other surveys were Geodetic and Topographic survey carried out by different branches of the Survey of India.

The Marine Survey of India office at Dunmore House, Coonoor, Nilgiris, where on completion of survey season, preliminary work relating to chart production is generally undertaken, was also reactivated¹⁰ in April 1950 and the work on the drawing of three fair sheets of Kandla Area was completed by September 1950. The completed Fair Sheets and the data file were sent to the Survey of India Printing Office at Dehra Dun where they were photographed and printed. The Kandla Port Authorities and Naval ships were provided with these charts. The Fair Sheets and the Triangulation Data File were despatched to the British Admiralty where work had already commenced on the production of a new chart based upon the surveys carried out by the Marine Survey of India. In addition, survey work on Ormara East Bay (including Harmonic Tidal Analysis), Bombay Naval Anchorage along with the report on survey, Sacramento Shoal, Cochin Naval Jetty, Bhatkal, Malpe and Mangalore were also completed at Coonoor and despatched to the British Admiralty during 1945-50; during this period the British Admiralty published charts of Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Karnaphuli River and its approaches, River Hooghly and Sagar Roads to Calcutta, Dhamra River, Koronge Island to White Point, Gulf of Martaban, Kyaukpyu harbour to Cheduba Strait, Cheduba Strait to Ramree harbour, Strait Banka and Gasper Strait and Point Pedro to Delft Island. India at this stage was completely dependent upon the British Admiralty for her chart production.

Keeping in view the task that lay ahead for revision of surveys of the entire Indian coastline, measuring approximately 6000 nautical miles, several major and minor ports and to meet the urgent requirement of shipping, Government approved in principle, the setting up of a Hydrographic Office at Dehra Dun in 1949. The selection of this site was made with the view, that it remain in close proximity to the Marine Survey of India. Though stationed away from New Delhi, the Chief Hydrographer was placed under the then Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff in Naval Headquarters to ensure better coordination with the Ministries of Defence, Transport and the Planning Commission for catering to defence and civil requirements. However, when a Senior Surveyor, Captain Hennessey, who was loaned from the Royal Navy, arrived in India, he set up his office at Naval Headquarters. Simultaneously, *HMIS Kukri*,¹¹ a River Class frigate was converted into a major survey ship and was commissioned on October 31, 1950 as *INS Investigator*. This was the fifth successive *Investigator* in the Marine Survey of India since 1828. *Sulej* and *Jumna*, two Bittern class sloops were also converted into survey ships after World War II.

The survey of Hansthal Creek and Navlakhi which commenced in November 1950 was also completed along with the area eastward up to Navlakhi port. The survey of the Gulf of Kutch north-eastward of Lat 22° 47' N Long 70° 01' E including the ports of Kandla and Navlakhi was thus completed by December 1950.

As the number of personnel fell well short of requirements in 1947, it became necessary to obtain on loan from the United Kingdom some surveying officers with hydrographic experience to enable the Indian Navy to establish its hydrographic office in India. These senior surveying officers not only filled the vacuum in sea billets such as commanding surveying ships, but guided the staff in setting up the office at Dehra Dun.

Meanwhile Lieutenant Commander S. Rajendra (later Commodore) who had been deputed to the U.K. for six months training at the Hydrographic Office and the Royal Navy Surveying Ships, completed his training and returned to India. A few junior officers underwent similar training later. In addition, two batches, consisting of three Survey Recorders each, were also sent to undergo training both ashore and on board ships. The surveying cadre had only twelve officers on its roll by December 1950.

To train personnel in the surveying discipline in India, a beginning was made by deputing them from the general service to surveying ships where they could learn whilst on job. In order to attain proficiency in hydrography, however, an extensive, systematic and planned training in various facets of the subjects was essential. A hydrographic training unit was thus set up at Naval Chart Depot, Bombay under the administrative control of the Commodore-in-Charge, Bombay. This unit was primarily meant for training junior officers and sailors as well as a few civilians of hydrographic organisations of maritime states and ports of India.

Personnel engaged on survey duties invariably spend nearly eight months of the year at sea, working on many occasions in uninhabitable environments for long periods. Theirs is a non-glamorous specialisation requiring considerable perseverance and dedication in an unobtrusive manner. The final results of their endeavours ensure that those going to sea—in the fighting service as well as in the mercantile marine—always have safe passage and are warned of hazards and dangers where these exist. As time goes on, the responsibilities of surveyors will increase with the developing emphasis on oceanographic science.

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11. The Medicos at Sea

WHEN THE Indian Marine Service was created in 1612,¹ medical needs of officers and sailors were met by practitioners then classified as “chirurgeon, twoe and a barber”—the 17th century barber-surgeon—who was part of the ship’s company. These ‘medicos’, void of any military status or rank, took care of the medical needs not only of ship’s personnel but also of those stationed ashore. They were, however, relieved of the latter duties in 1745 when the Army organised a medical set-up ashore

Chirurgeons were soon imparted respectability by their being redesignated as ships’ surgeons. Their recruitment was generally from local shore medical services. In due course the latter were organised into three Presidency Medical Services,² one each for the Presidencies of Bombay, Bengal and Madras. These three parallel medical organisations were amalgamated in 1896 and the famous Indian Medical Service (IMS) came into being. Medicos who were in the IMS held commissions as combatant officers in addition to their warrant as assistant surgeons.

To meet the growing needs of the British and Indian troops in India, the Indian Medical Department—British Cadre² (IMD-BC) was later created and comprised poor British and Anglo-Indian boys who were given medical training up to the licentiate level. The IMS and the IMD-BC met the medical requirements of the Navy at that time—IMS officers sitting pretty onshore with the poor IMD-BC officers roughing it out at sea!

Every ship of the RIM from 1892 onwards carried an Assistant Surgeon of the IMD-BC. These Assistant Surgeons had warrant rank of the Army, wore Army uniform, received Army rates of pay and allowances and drew their stores from Army sources. They were seconded to the RIM for a period of two to three years. One of the ships, the *Investigator*, in addition, carried on board an IMS officer who was also a marine biologist and hence was called the Surgeon Naturalist.

At the outbreak of World War I, the RIM³ started working in conjunction with the RN which had taken over control of the RIM by then. During the War, each of the large ships carried an Assistant Surgeon of the IMD-BC. Three ships, the *Dufferin*, the *Northbrooke* and the *Hardinge*, also had a medical officer each—either from the Indian Medical Service (IMS) or the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR).

With World War II there was an acute shortage of personnel and because

of its own needs, the Army could not meet the requirement of the Navy and the secondment of Assistant Surgeons of the IMD was discontinued. Instead, Emergency Commission Officers⁴ of the IMS were selected from volunteers for secondment to the Navy. This continued for about a year from the later half of 1942. Initially the set-up appeared to be satisfactory but later the quality and number of volunteers for the Navy began to fall. At the same time there was tremendous expansion in the Navy and, therefore, the need was felt for a full-fledged medical branch for this Service. The Director General of the IMS approached the Government and obtained sanction for direct recruitment of doctors into the Navy. In 1943 several civilian doctors were granted commission in the Navy to form the Royal Indian Navy Medical branch. This gave the Navy, Medical Officers who were keen to serve in the Navy and also provided a wider range of selection. In addition to direct recruitment, suitable Army Medical Officers and officers of the Indian Medical Service continued to be selected for secondment to the Navy if they volunteered.

In 1944, the Secretary of State approved the formation of a Medical Branch⁴ of the Royal Indian Navy Volunteer Reserve (RINVR). This consisted of officers of the IMS and Army Medical Officers who had been seconded for service in the RIN. During their service in the Navy, the regular officers were commissioned in the RIN and the Emergency Commission officers in the RINVR. Some honorary consultants were also commissioned in the RINVR.

Naval Medical Officers of the RIN and the RINVR were for the first time given naval ranks equivalent to their Army or IMS entitlements. They were required to wear the uniform of the Navy with a distinctive scarlet band in their badges of rank and were subject to the Royal Indian Navy Discipline Act.

A system of appointing specialists in various branches of medicine and surgery did not exist in the RIN at that time nor was the system of the graded specialists recognised. There were many Medical Officers of the status of specialists, or at least graded specialists, in medicine, surgery, public health, ophthalmology and pathology but they were denied this privilege. To obtain expert opinion and treatment, the RIN appointed nine consultants from the leading specialists in Bombay who were given honorary naval ranks and were attached to the Royal Indian Navy Hospital at Bombay. These consultants gave approximately three mornings a week to the Navy.

A Naval Wing of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India)⁴ was formed on February 12, 1944 and was renamed the Women's Royal Indian Naval Service (WRINS) on March 2, 1945. The Naval Staff Surgeon looked after the personnel based in Bombay which did not include women employees. The first lady doctor to be recruited to meet the medical requirements of the WRINS was Dr. (Miss) Daisy Pereira who was commissioned in the Navy on September 4, 1944 in the rank of Surgeon Lieutenant and was appointed to *HMIS Dalhousie* at Bombay. Members of the WRINS outside Bombay were attend-

ed to by the Medical Officers of the establishments concerned and special arrangements were made for them in the sickbays.

There were no nursing sisters in the Navy until the Royal Indian Navy Hospital⁵ was opened in April 1943 at Sewri, Bombay. Seven Nursing Officers were then enlisted. Two years later the number had risen to 17. They were recruited directly by the Medical Officer-in-Charge of the RIN Hospital from qualified civilian nurses. Their pay and conditions of service were similar to those of the Indian Military Nursing Service but different in that they were not commissioned Nursing Officers. All the nursing officers of the Navy were released when the RIN Hospital at Sewri was closed down in 1946.

The development of the RIN Medical Service⁶ continued with the rapid expansion of the Navy during World War II and by the end of the War, it had expanded from just one Major at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 to 100 Medical Officers including one Surgeon Captain and three Surgeon Commanders.

With the passage of time, the IMS (from which Medical Officers were seconded to the RIN from 1942 onwards) became the Indian Army Medical Corps (IAMC) in 1949. It, however, continued to follow the old pattern of seconding its Medical Officers to the Indian Navy's Medical branch.

The complement of various sickbays, ashore and afloat, was based on the actual workload and the rank structure of Medical Officers at the time and was not related to the bed-strength as was the case in the Army. With the integration of the Armed Forces Medical Service in 1949, the staffing pattern in the Navy was revised and was brought almost on par with the one followed in the Army.

This was good progress indeed but the rejuvenation of the Naval Medical branch and the cognisance of the importance of the role of the 'Doctor at Sea' as an important member of a ship's company can be said to have begun with the appointment of the Director of Medical Services in the Navy in January 1949 in the rank of Surgeon Captain.

The Medical Services of the Navy kept pace both with the expansion in the Navy and the integration of the Armed Forces Medical Services and a number of Junior Medical Officers including some specialist Medical Officers from the Army were seconded to the Navy, while some Naval Medical Officers were reverted to the Army.

The development of the cadre of the male nursing staff known today as Medical Assistants⁷ did not lag far behind. Although there were doctors on board ships from 1612 onwards, nursing and general patient care were neglected during the three centuries that followed. In those days it was not considered necessary to employ trained nursing staff and a rating who was either lazy or an alcoholic or was unsuitable for any other useful tasks on the ship was allotted to the unfortunate doctor as the high-sounding "Surgeon's Mate" but was generally referred to as the "Surgeon's Hate" because of his questionable use to the Ship's Surgeon. On account of the physical or mental shortcomings and other handicaps of the "mate" the doctor had to do most of

his work himself and was for all practical purposes a one man mini hospital. This practice continued for many years till it was decided to form a separate Sick Berth branch. Ten volunteers from the Seaman and the Stoker branches were taken to form the Sick Berth branch in 1914. These ratings were sent to the Military Hospital, Pune for a 12-month training course in first aid and nursing. On completion of the training, they were appointed on ships and shore establishments as Sick Berth Attendants (SBAs). This is the nucleus from which, over the years, has emerged the Medical Assistant's branch of today.

This innovation was obviously a success because soon after 1914, the Navy started selecting the ratings for the Sick Berth branch from the Seaman and Stoker branches instead of taking volunteers. However, in the absence of any naval medical training facility at that time, the selected ratings continued to get their training in the Military Hospital at Pune.

A major step in the formation of the Sick Berth branch⁸ was taken in 1937 when ratings were enrolled for the branch by direct recruitment. The response, however, was very poor because of the low pay of Rs. 25 per month. The pay was later increased to Rs. 50-55-57 per month which produced the desired results and the Sick Berth branch at the end of World War II had 600 SBAs and two Branch List Officers. With the expansion of the Navy, the strength of the branch has gone up considerably.

Besides sickbays, dispensaries, sick quarters and other medical facilities ashore, the Navy has had her hospitals from time to time. A map of the Bombay Dockyard area⁹ of 1750 shows a General Hospital within the Dockyard premises. This hospital looked after the British personnel ashore and those transferred ashore from ships. The map of Bombay of 1803, however, shows a Military Hospital just outside the Naval Barracks and within the area which at that time was known as the Bombay Castle. Since the General Hospital continued where it was in the Dockyard premises, it can be presumed that a division of labour had taken place and the Army had decided to treat its own sick and wounded. It could also be that the strength of the Army in Bombay had gone up at that time. But integration, perhaps, was not considered practicable at that time and was not resorted to.

From 1863 to 1943, the Navy did not have a hospital of her own and naval officers and their families were sent to St. George's Hospital, Bombay whenever hospitalisation was required while the ratings were transferred to Military Hospital, Colaba and the civilian employees to various civil hospitals in Bombay. These arrangements, however, resulted in a wide dispersal of sick naval personnel. Hence, on a request from the Navy, the authorities of St. George's Hospital placed one of their wards at the disposal of the Navy on July 1, 1940. This 'Naval Ward' was manned by the Medical Officers of the RIN and RN.

With the expansion of the Navy after the outbreak of World War II, the number of patients requiring hospitalisation rose. The IN also had to cater for the medical needs of the RN, the Allied Navies and the Merchant Navy.

The Army, because of its own requirements, was already hard put and was unable to meet the requirements of the Navy. Because of the urgent requirement of proper and adequate arrangements for the Navy's sick and wounded, the need for a properly constituted Naval Hospital in or around Bombay was felt. At one stage, it was proposed to take over St. George's Hospital for the Navy but this was not done as it meant depriving the civilian population of its hospital.

The building of the Ramesh Premchand Sanatorium at Sewri, Bombay had been completed in 1940 but had not been equipped nor was it likely to be equipped during the War. Sanction of the Government of India was therefore obtained in 1942 for the Navy to take over this building along with the surrounding land for the purpose of converting it into a Royal Indian Navy Hospital (RIN Hospital) of 250 beds. In April 1943, a 50-bed hospital started functioning and the bed-strength increased rapidly and rose to 300 by 1944. The hospital was self-contained and had its own radiology and clinical pathology departments. The civilian employees of the Navy were also admitted during an emergency subject to availability of beds. It was the Navy's base hospital and naval patients from all over the country were taken there for specialised treatment. The specialist staff of the RIN Hospital, which was a tender of *HMIS Dalhousie* (now *INS Angre*), were civilian doctors granted honorary commissions in the Navy. This hospital, however, was closed down in 1946 and, in lieu, a RIN Wing of 120 beds was opened in the Combined Military Hospital, Colaba. This too was closed down in 1948 due to the marked reduction in the strength of the Navy caused by post-World War II demobilisation.

Independence heralded manifold expansion of various branches of the Armed Forces. The Navy now needed a separate hospital to look after her personnel. Bombay was ideally suited since it had been the home port of the Navy. The then Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services, Lieutenant General D.R. Thapar, accepted the request for establishing a Naval Hospital and agreed to turn the Military Hospital, Colaba over to the Navy. The transfer was effected on September 1, 1951 and the hospital was commissioned as Indian Naval Hospital Ship *Asvini*¹⁰ on September 18, 1951. The 'King's Seaman Hospital' of 1758—after almost 200 years with her foster-parent, the Army—came back to her rightful owner, the Navy!

The development of facilities for dental care in the Navy kept pace with that in the other disciplines. Prior to 1943, dental treatment to naval personnel was provided by civilian dental surgeons who worked on annual, renewable, contracts. At that time, a well-known dental surgeon of Bombay, Dr. G. Vachha had a contract to provide dental treatment to naval personnel in and around Bombay and Dr. Thomas was attached to the naval base at Cochin. These civilian dental surgeons were paid according to the type and quantum of work carried out for which they put in tenders every year.

The naval cadre of dental surgeons was founded when a civilian dental surgeon—Dr. A.R.S. Hossen—was commissioned in the Army Dental

Corps¹¹ (AD Corps) on April 2, 1943 and was seconded to the Navy as a Surgeon Lieutenant. On secondment to the Navy, he was appointed to *HMIS Hamla* which was a Landing Craft Wing Depot at Marve, Bombay at that time. But in actual practice he was stationed at Mandapam which was the base for the combined operations.

Subsequently, two more dental surgeons were inducted into the Navy from the Army Dental Corps—Surgeon Lieutenant M.R. Vig reported to the Navy on March 18, 1944 and was made Officer-in-Charge of the Dental Centre at *HMIS Akbar*, Bombay, the training establishment for direct entry ratings. Similarly, Surgeon Lieutenant F.J.E. Nazareth joined the Navy on August 14, 1944 and on January 20, 1945 took over as the Officer-in-Charge of the Dental Centre of *HMIS Shivaji* at Lonavla.

After the War, the naval base at Mandapam was closed down and Surgeon Lieutenant Hossen was appointed to the Dental Centre of *HMIS Cheetah*, a coastal force base at Trombay in Bombay.

After Independence, *HMIS Akbar* and *HMIS Cheetah* were closed down. Surgeon Lieutenant Hossen went away to Pakistan and Surgeon Lieutenant Vig was transferred to the Dental Centre of *HMIS Dalhousie* which was sanctioned on August 15, 1947.

Until 1948, the Navy had only two dental centres one with *HMIS Dalhousie* at Bombay and the other with *HMIS Shivaji* at Lonavla. Several dental centres, both afloat and ashore, were established thereafter.

There are no separate sailors for the Naval Dental branch. The medical assistants who specialise in dental subjects after compulsory training in general nursing are appointed to various naval dental centres. These medical assistants are also posted to various sickbays, from time to time, so that they continue to practice their basic profession of nursing patients back to health.

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12. Budget

THE DEVELOPMENT of the Indian Navy in relation to the resource allocations made during the period 1945 to 1950 is significant due to certain major events that took place during those eventful years.

The primary objective of the Government at that time, apparently, was to reduce the economic burden caused by the War and this was sought to be achieved by the demobilisation and decommissioning of a sizeable portion of the war machinery which included manpower, hardware, ships and craft. The second objective was to settle the war dues and Revenue Accounts.

At such a juncture, therefore, prevalent norms or defined guidelines could hardly be followed. Furthermore, even a cursory examination of the documents on the relevant Defence Services Estimates reveals that explanatory memoranda of any kind that were prepared were only from 1947-48 onwards. No explanation is available to enable an analysis on the basis of allocation of funds, the thought process of the planners, or the premises leading to the order of priorities for the allocation of funds during the earlier years. Therefore, appreciation and justification of allocations of funds to various heads of expenditure is very difficult. It is neither appropriate nor a fruitful exercise to carry out an analysis or arrive at deductions regarding the trend of financial management pertaining to this period. Wherever it is possible, however, an attempt has been made to highlight certain statements found in the documents and to deduce the relative priorities in the fiscal mental make-up of the financial body or the authorities that laid down the ground rules at the time.

The Defence budget was divided into four categories: Defence Services Effective or the expenditure on military defence, local naval defence and air defence; Defence Services Non-effective, the expenditure on rewards, pensions, decorations and payments to civil departments; Capital Expenditure, involving industrial expenditure, new construction for the RIN, airfields and telecommunication schemes; and Recoveries, or war contributions and receipts in India and England.

An analytical study of the Defence Services Estimates for the years 1945-46 and 1946-47, besides giving an indication of the relative priority attached to various heads of expenditure by the planners, brings out several interesting facts.

Table 1 indicates the magnitude of Defence Expenditure (in Rs. crores) during 1945-46 and 1946-47:

TABLE 1

Revenue	Budget estimates	
	1945-46	1946-47
Effective	385.1	232.84
Non-effective	9.2	10.93
Total	394.3	243.77
Capital	17.7	1.57

The significant deductions that can be made from this table are that the allocation to Defence Development or Capital Expenditure was only 3.9 per cent of the maintenance cost (Total Revenue Expenditure). This too dropped drastically to 0.8 per cent in the following year. This gives a very clear indication of the British attitude (indifference?) towards developmental activities in the field of Defence in the Indian subcontinent at that time; the allocation for welfare, pensions and awards was 2.2 to 2.7 per cent of the total revenue expenditure. The main share of this went to the Army (both British and Indian personnel) and the Navy, which in those years was primarily manned by the British; a large share contributed towards the war machinery for the war that was not fought on Indian soil. How much of this share was actually meant for India and how much served British interests abroad could possibly be inferred from the sub-calculation out of the total Revenue Estimates as given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

	Budget estimates	
	1945-46	1946-47
Pre-War Defence Services	36.8	36.8
Provision for increased prices	19.8	17.5
War measures chargeable to Indian Revenue	328.5	178.6
Total	385.1	232.9

Resource allocation for "certain measures connected with the Local Naval Defence" and their percentage shares on the total Defence Allocation mentioned earlier are as given in Table 3.

The capital outlay for the Navy is found to be 2.8 per cent of the total capital outlay for 1945-46 and 28 per cent for 1946-47. The capital outlay was earmarked under the heading "New Construction for the Royal Indian Navy." An interesting fact that emerges from this analysis is that while the overall trend of the naval share was on the decline, the allocation for construction of new ships for the Royal Indian Navy was increased.

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Total	394.3	243.77
Capital	17.7	1.57

The significant deductions that can be made from this table are that the allocation to Defence Development or Capital Expenditure was only 3.9 per cent of the maintenance cost (Total Revenue Expenditure). This too dropped drastically to 0.8 per cent in the following year. This gives a very clear indication of the British attitude (indifference?) towards developmental activities in the field of Defence in the Indian subcontinent at that time; the allocation for welfare, pensions and awards was 2.2 to 2.7 per cent of the total revenue expenditure. The main share of this went to the Army (both British and Indian personnel) and the Navy, which in those years was primarily manned by the British; a large share contributed towards the war machinery for the war that was not fought on Indian soil. How much of this share was actually meant for India and how much served British interests abroad could possibly be inferred from the sub-calculation out of the total Revenue Estimates as given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

	Budget estimates	
	1945-46	1946-47
Pre-War Defence Services	36.8	36.8
Provision for increased prices	19.8	17.5
War measures chargeable to Indian Revenue	328.5	178.6
Total	385.1	232.9

Resource allocation for "certain measures connected with the Local Naval Defence" and their percentage shares on the total Defence Allocation mentioned earlier are as given in Table 3.

The capital outlay for the Navy is found to be 2.8 per cent of the total capital outlay for 1945-46 and 28 per cent for 1946-47. The capital outlay was earmarked under the heading "New Construction for the Royal Indian Navy." An interesting fact that emerges from this analysis is that while the overall trend of the naval share was on the decline, the allocation for construction of new ships for the Royal Indian Navy was increased.

TABLE 3

Revenue	Budget estimates	
	1945-46	1946-47
Effective	4.55 (1.1%)	2.56 (1.09%)
Non-effective	0.09 (0.9%)	0.1 (0.9%)
Capital	0.5	0.44

A scrutiny of the allocations for the year 1947-48 makes another fact discernible—while large-scale demobilisation from the Army and the Navy was planned and partially implemented in 1946, 1947 and 1948, it had been decided that the Air Force strength was to be maintained at the then existing strength of squadrons. In the context of the RIN, the document states, "This is a small Service compared to the Army, but a substantial reduction in the strength of its personnel has been achieved mainly by the release of requisitioned vessels, the return of others to the Admiralty and placing a number of RIN vessels in reserve . . . by the end of 1946 the total reduction in strength of the RIN, since V.J. Day, amount to approximately 19,500 officers and men." When we look at the allocation to the Defence Services against the background of large-scale demobilisation, the reduction appears reasonable. The allocation was reduced to Rs. 188.70 crores as against the allocation of Rs. 245.34 crores in the previous year. No provision for any capital expenditure was, however, made and it was decided that provisions for all such expenditure would be made under the appropriate Revenue Heads. There was no definite policy regarding the size and composition of free India's Armed Forces in general.

In so far as the naval share was concerned, the percentage share was substantially raised (from 2.56 to 4.42 per cent). The explanatory notes pertaining to the naval budget of 1947-48 state that the ultimate composition of the RIN would depend upon the policy decision regarding India's post-war Armed Forces. The document makes the assumption that during 1947-48, the RIN Fleet would consist of the vessels as shown in Table 4.

The average strength of personnel afloat for calculating pay and allowances for the period was estimated to be 291 officers and 4560 ratings.

The trend of budgetary allocation to the Defence Services underwent significant change during the period 1948 to 1951. The explanatory memorandum preceding the Budget Estimates for 1948-49 sets forth the salient features of the then existing political and strategic environment. To quote, "It was the intention to reorganise the Armed Forces as soon as its reconstitution was complete. The Army was to have been reorganised into a well-knit compact force—mechanised and modernised—to allow for the expansion of the Royal Indian Navy and the Royal Indian Air Force, so necessary for

TABLE 4

Type of ships	Number in commission	Number in reserve	Total
Sloops	6	—	6 (One of these two were serving in Japanese waters at that time)
Frigates	3	1	4
Trawlers	4	2	6
Fleet Minesweepers	4	12	16
Survey Vessels	1	—	1
Corvettes	1	—	1
Harbour Defence Motor Launches	8	—	8
Landing Craft (various types)	38	26	64

establishing a balance between the three Services with reference to the strategic requirements of the country. As a result of the outbreak of communal disturbances in the country soon after partition and the ingress of raiders into Kashmir through Pakistan territory, it has not been possible to recommence demobilisation, as originally contemplated, nor has it been possible to undertake long-term planning for the reorganisation of the Armed Forces.

“Certain measures for the expansion of the Royal Indian Navy and the Air Force, however, have been initiated which will fit in with the tentative plan for the future composition and size of these forces.”

It is thus clear that by 1948 there existed a realisation that India needed to be given a maritime compatibility which the size, shape and geography of the nation and the geo-political situation in the region demanded. It also appears that there was a clear understanding even at that time that development of maritime capability would have a long gestation period and measures for its development could not be allowed to await finalisation of long-term or overall plans.

The memorandum also brings out that the Government policy was that the Armed Forces be manned completely by Indian nationals. A few British officers, however, remained on non-operational duties and advisory appointments in such fields as training of personnel and technical maintenance. In the RIN, in particular, certain British officers remained in executive capacity for quite some time.

By the year 1949-50, the Navy's share of the Defence budget had reached 6.9 per cent. The actual percentage fall to 4.8, however, was partly due to the RIN's inability to fully utilise the allocation and partly to overspending by the Army which was, perhaps, on account of additional commitments in Jammu and Kashmir.

In the fifties, whilst Britain did charge India heavily for the maintenance

of the war machinery and the surplus vehicles, equipment, stores, etc., left behind, the sterling balance continued to remain in our favour for some time. The RIN, therefore, managed the induction of some old ships from the RN and the acquisition of a few new frigates and an aircraft carrier in the later years which only indicated that the decision to develop the IN was finally being implemented.

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13. Logistics

NAVAL STORES ORGANISATION

The Naval Stores Organisation was able to meet the requirements of the tiny fleet of the RIN in the pre-War period quite satisfactorily but with the outbreak of the War, heavy responsibilities fell upon it and it could not rise to the occasion. The vast requirements that had to be catered for made it most difficult to establish facilities for the provision of stores on a reasonable basis. To begin with, approximately 1200 items had been obtained from the U.K. before the War and the remainder mainly through a few shipchandlers in Bombay. The Supply Department had previously dealt with only very few items such as oil, petrol and coal, and hence naval requirements in the matter of general stores were completely unknown to it. This was very largely due to the fact that before the War the average requirement of most of the items was too small to be dealt with by the Supply Department and remained within the local purchase powers of the Naval Store Officers.

There was neither any proper inspection service nor any specifications or patterns, and therefore when it became necessary to obtain stores through the Supply Department in June 1940, several problems were faced. The lack of specifications together with the vast range of non-standard articles being demanded by all types of ships and craft, both of the RIN as well as those outside the Service, led to considerable confusion and delay. It was estimated that stores worth approximately Rs. 4 crores were purchased in India during the War. A very wide range of materials had to be procured for sampling and whilst the Controller of Inspection was responsible for examining and passing all supplies, it was necessary for the department to keep a constant watch over these activities to ensure that reasonable standards were maintained.

Planning the requirements without any guidance about the possible expenditure was extremely difficult; but in June 1940, professional officers were asked to give some kind of estimate in the matter such as materials, steel and timber. This was the first real attempt at forward supply arrangements. But the ever-increasing demand on the services of the Dockyard soon made even these estimates totally inadequate. Furthermore, by the time some of these supplies were actually received, the sizes and other requirements were

unsuitable for the type of work that the Dockyard was expected to undertake at that point of time. The sizes of supplies procured, for example, were based on requirements of sloops and local naval defence vessels whilst the work actually being handled at the Dockyard was major repairs to destroyers and cruisers damaged in action. The same situation arose in regard to the range of general stores—at the beginning of the War there were about 10,000 items of regular supply stocked, many of which were obsolete by the Royal Navy standards; these stores multiplied to 35,000 to 40,000 items by the end of the War.

In 1941, the Admiralty advised that all possible supplies must be obtained locally and the RIN should set about building up production in India. In the matter of clothing and mess traps, this had been well-established by the end of the year, but the RIN set up a Victualling Depot in Bombay which was not bound to purchase provisions through the Supply Department at the time.

The professional staff of the Electrical Department was of considerable help and very soon an excellent range of electrical fittings of special Admiralty pattern were under production in Calcutta.

By the end of 1942, the RIN began to set up various shore establishments for personnel in Bombay. This added to the already heavy demands on the Naval Stores Department as it had to provide practically all that was required except buildings.

The general stores position in the Royal Naval Yards abroad became progressively worse, adding further to the demands on the RIN. The Naval Stores Office had several units of the Eastern Fleet to deal with during the period. The requirements of all could naturally not be met and the serious state of affairs, after repeated representations to senior RN officers, was eventually brought to the notice of the Admiralty. As a result, a Main Store Depot, a Naval Store-keeping Office, a Landing Craft Base and several other special stores establishments were set up in 1943. These establishments, however, began to make heavy demands on the Royal Indian Navy Organisation due to delay in the arrival of supplies from the U.K. and elsewhere. The end result of all this was that the supply position and forward policy were in a continual state of flux. Tremendous quantities of stores were stated to be essential for operational needs, so that it was almost impossible to discriminate and keep sufficient quantities in stock to meet emergency requirements. The Naval Stores Department, nevertheless, was able to meet approximately one million demands from ships and establishments during the War.

In May 1943, proposals were submitted for expansion based on experience of the War up to that time, on the assumption that a similar degree of demand would continue, and after several months, approval was accorded to this. The Admiralty sent out its staff and agreed to supply all requirements. This was necessary as the Supply Department had by then nearly broken down on account of the wide variety and range of stores required from indigenous sources.

When World War II was over, the requirements of Naval Store items decreased considerably but the organisation continued to face difficulties in meeting the requirements of the RIN in respect of many items like boats, fumigation, refrigerators and machine tools. The organisation had to make concerted efforts to ease the supply position. The Director General, Shipbuilding and Repairs in Bombay, and the Director General, Ammunition Production and Army Headquarters were approached to meet the requirements through the Admiralty, for which a formal agreement was subsequently concluded.

The running and maintenance of the RIN Motor Transport Wing was made the responsibility of the Naval Stores Organisation in 1946. In 1950, a decision on the question of taking over the work of maintenance of vehicles by the Indian Navy from the Army, which was under consideration for some time, was reached and it was decided that the IN should take this over in the establishments where such facilities existed without any extra expenditure by way of staff, equipment and other ancillary requirements.

Considerable activity was created in the organisation in connection with the work of the provision of new engines, badges and buttons consequent on the country being declared a Republic on January 26, 1950. Every possible source of supply, either through the U.K. or from indigenous sources, was investigated and efforts were made to provide the maximum quantities possible to the ships and establishments by that date.

The question of supply of better fitting garments for the IN in general was taken up in August 1950 with the Chief Superintendent, Development, Textiles and Clothing Establishment, Kanpur where samples of the existing ill-fitting garments and samples of garments required were produced. As a result of this joint discussion, garments suiting the requirements of the Indian Navy are now being manufactured by the Director General of Ordnance Factories.

Up to October 1943, the Naval Stores Organisation was located in Bombay with a Naval Stores Officer at its head, there being no such organisation at other ports. In October 1943 the Admiralty agreed to loan two officers from the U.K., one as Superintending Naval Stores Officer (India) and one as a Deputy Naval Stores Officer. Thereafter expansion proceeded rapidly and Naval Stores Depots and Offices were set up at all ports. The Cochin Depot was, however, closed down in September 1944 and the RN assumed responsibility for naval stores at that port.

Difficulty in obtaining suitable officers, both uniformed and civilian, for the Naval Stores Organisation had been a source of anxiety. The Master General of the Ordnance, however, lent the RIN eight officers in 1945 and the Admiralty eventually agreed to the loan of more officers from the U.K.

Matters concerning the Naval Stores Organisation were, until November 1945 handled at Naval Headquarters by the Equipment Directorate when it was decided to move the office of the Superintending Naval Stores Officer (India) from Bombay to Delhi. The work connected with the stores organisation was taken over by the Superintending Naval Stores Officer (India) who was redesignated Director of Stores in July 1946. The Equipment Direc-

torate was abolished in September 1946 and the major portion of the work was transferred to the Director of Stores. The section dealing with small craft machinery was placed under the Directorate of Engineering.

After Independence, a plan to expand the Navy to meet the maritime requirements of the country was presented to the Government. Taking in view the anticipated increase in logistic activities and responsibilities due to the expected expansion in the IN, the Naval Stores Organisation presented a comprehensive plan for nationalisation and augmentation of manpower to the Government in 1948. The major recommendations made in this plan paper to the Government were: approval in principle of the plans for augmentation of manpower for the future, recruitment of officers through the Federal Public Service Commission and Indianisation of all senior posts held by the British personnel.

In 1939, the entire Royal Indian Navy Organisation was centred in HMI Dockyard, Bombay. This included the Headquarters and training establishments. In 1940, the activities of the Dockyard increased considerably with the taking over of 30 local Naval Defence vessels, fitting out four Armed Merchant Cruisers, three Armed Boarding Vessels and six Hospital Ships, resulting in acute congestion. In those early days, requisition of sites and buildings outside the Dockyard was extremely difficult. It was not until early 1941 that the Naval Store Department managed to secure approval for two Bulk Store Depots, some 20 miles from the Dockyard. By the end of 1942, these had been opened and four more had begun to function at either naval base. Two more storage depots and three storage points were opened by the middle of 1943.

The development plan for the Indian Navy was presented to the Government in 1947. There was a proposal to augment the Naval Stores Depot at Vishakhapatnam which was set up in 1947 and to set up a new Naval Stores Depot at Cochin which was consequently set up in 1951.

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14. Development of Facilities for Naval Scientific Research

AS FAR BACK as 1949, it was realised by Vice Admiral Sir Edward Parry, the then Commander-in-Chief of the RIN, that any Service that depended entirely on imported ships, equipment and expertise would rue the day the umbilical cord of vital supplies from abroad was severed. It was he who, during the late forties, had decided to set up a naval research and development organisation¹ in India so that it could help the Navy to progressively indigenise the production of naval hardware and develop the necessary expertise within the country. He invited Dr. J.E. Keyston of the Royal Naval Scientific Service to visit India and advise on the formation of a research and development wing of the RIN. Dr. Keyston arrived in India in September 1949 on a two-month fact finding and advisory assignment.

During his stay in India, Dr. Keyston held discussions with various officials and visited several technical establishments, three naval establishments—*HMIS Venduruthy*, *Valsura* and *Shivaji*, the technical development establishments of the Indian Army, and some of the national laboratories and research institutes.

In his 'Report on the Requirement of the Royal Indian Navy for Scientific Assistance' submitted to the CINC, RIN in December 1949, Dr. Keyston made several recommendations for providing scientific assistance which would enhance the technological and operational efficiency of the RIN.

The RIN, as free India's naval arm, would need the services of a scientific community² for the main purposes of assisting in the efficient maintenance of ships and equipment, involving: modification to suit local conditions and promotion of the most effective use of naval material; building up an indigenous storehouse of scientific knowledge of the properties and behaviour of the sea, ships and equipment; application of scientific study and analysis to the problems of the operational use and development of naval arms and other hard and software; and provision of assistance in the development of scientific orientation in naval personnel. The scientist responsible for carrying out these tasks, as visualised at that time, would be a combination of the pure research scientist, the applied research scientist, the development scientist and the new-design scientist; besides, he would be a physicist, chemist, mathematician, electrical engineer, mechanical engineer, marine engi-

neer, naval architect, medical scientist, oceanographer, and biologist, all rolled into one—a tall order but an inescapable necessity.

While discussing the kind of assistance that the scientist would provide for the efficient maintenance of naval material, Dr. Keyston says, “A crankshaft may fracture, a casting crack, a welded joint fail, a bearing corrode, or a mechanism become inoperative through unsatisfactory lubrication. The dockyard technician can make good the defect but the reliability and assurance of his repair or replacement depend on how expertly the reasons why the equipment has failed are determined and understood, and on how effectively the technological process used in the repair or replacement are matched to the conditions of use of the equipment; this is where the need for the investigational scientist is felt.

“The investigational metallurgist, chemist, engineer and physicist can contribute very greatly with his knowledge, techniques and instruments, to an understanding of reasons for failure of Service material, to elimination of the causes, to scientific control of workshop and foundry practices, to examination of dockyard materials and products, and to the economy with which all processes are operated. A laboratory in which scientific investigation and analysis can proceed is an essential component of a modern dockyard.

“In investigating the origins and solutions of maintenance problems, the scientist’s work will not be confined to the dockyard laboratory, but lead him to undertake tests and experiments on equipment in ships at sea, and to make experiments on and under the sea, as, for example, on the relative corrodibility of various alloys or on various means for preventing the fouling of a ship’s bottom by marine organisms.”³

This was recommended because it was felt that though the ships were maintained by the technicians in the ships and dockyards, they would need the professional help of scientists in order to obtain the most effective and economical results. Further, nearly all ships in the RIN, immediately after Independence, were the ones which had been acquired from the U.K. and thus were not suited to tropical and sub-tropical conditions. Hence a scientific study of the conditions prevailing in the waters around India and carrying out suitable modifications to ships, arms, ammunition and other equipment to suit these conditions was considered most essential.

For the promotion of the most effective use of shipboard equipment, a plan⁴ of action was recommended: (1) scientific tests for the selection of the right jobs, i.e., the jobs best matched for their natural aptitudes; (2) assisting in the local improvisation of equipment to fill the gaps created by non-availability of important training aids from abroad; (3) developing suitable working conditions in ships for optimising the efficiency of trained personnel such as conditions of ventilation and heat insulation in the working spaces, clothing to suit tropical conditions and giving maximum comfort; (4) adequate and suitable food and diet for maintaining health and efficiency and solving the problems arising in preventive and curative tropical naval medi-

cine; (5) promoting the efficiency of weapons and equipment such as guns, underwater weapons, radar and asdic (sonar) equipment by measuring and studying the transmission properties of the sea and air and placing on a sound basis the science of forecasting waves, swell and meteorological conditions at sea for determining the timing of amphibious operations to the best advantage; and (6) manufacturing defence material in India as had already been recommended by Professor P.N.S. Blackett in his 1948 report to the Minister of Defence.

To implement the plan required the assistance of scientists for the manufacture of naval equipment such as asdics, radar, predictors, guns and ammunition. This in turn necessitated scientists gaining expertise with naval scientific devices to ensure proper guidance to the nation's industry in the initial stages of manufacture. Special attention was to be given to the use of indigenous material and to finding substitutes for items or material which were hitherto imported.

It was felt at that time that it was essential for the RIN to set up a repository of scientific information and expertise in India for studying such aspects as underwater warfare, submarines, mines, torpedoes, radar, underwater detection and protection devices, remote control of weapons and equipment, and communication. A body of scientists skilled and experienced in the technique of scientific experimentation, on and in the sea and a fund of scientific knowledge of the nature and properties of sea—temperature, currents, acoustic and electromagnetic transmission, underwater characteristics of ships including magnetic and acoustic fields—would be an asset to the Service. Over a period of time, this would enable a scientist to inherit a tradition of sea and ship research and steep himself in the knowledge and experience of this kind of scientific work in the new environment with ease and rapidity. To quote Dr. Keyston, "Should the RIN become involved in war, its ability to counter speedily such 'devil's boxes' as magnetic and acoustic mines, perhaps including some novel types and combinations, would depend on whether or not there were available on the spot in India, scientists sufficiently steeped in Naval acoustical and magnetic science to be able to immediately discern and attack the kernels of the problems posed by the enemy."⁵

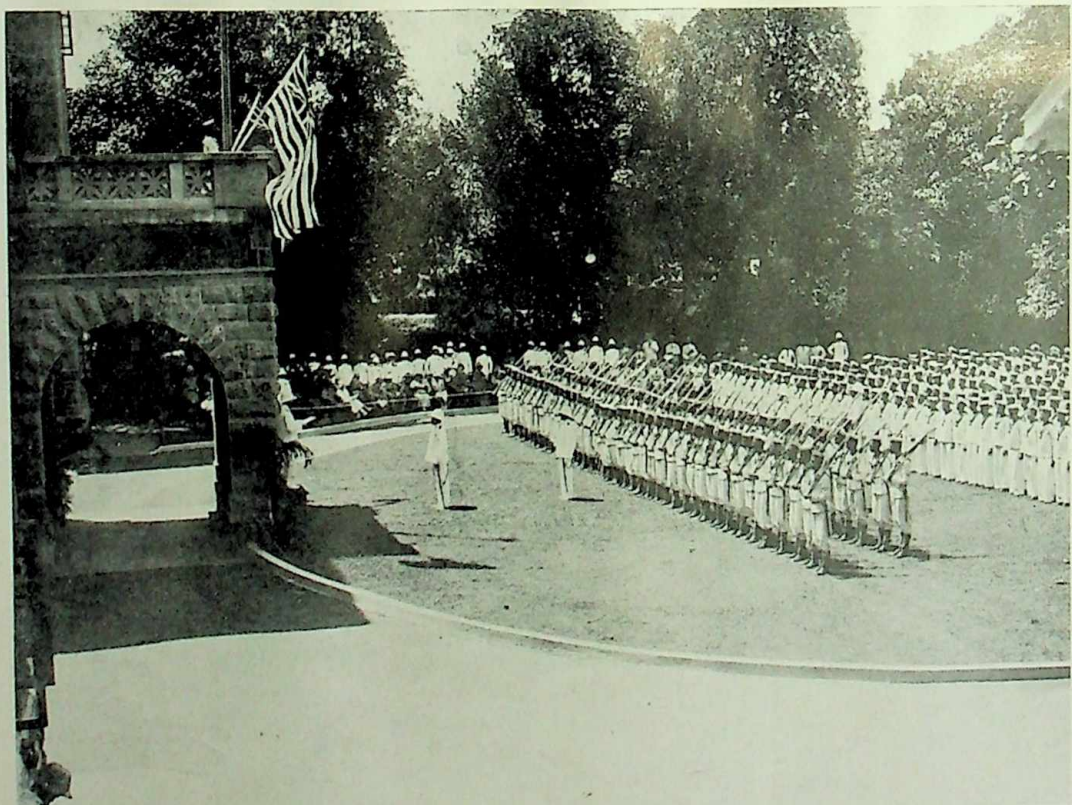
This aim could be achieved by sending scientists abroad to gather naval scientific experience and information and by obtaining the services of experienced naval scientists from overseas. This would, of course, logically lead to the establishment of a naval science laboratory on the coast of India.

In order to lay a scientific foundation for building the edifice of naval scientific research, Dr. Keyston examined the availability of resources, the requirements of the Service for the following two decades and the order of priorities of the naval authorities and made several recommendations for initiating such research. Based on these, he recommended the setting up⁶ of a Naval Dockyard Laboratory and an Underwater Science Establishment for which scientific assistance was to be sought from the scientific establishments of the Army, civilian scientific research institutions and the scientific organisations of other navies.

He also recommended the creation of an Indian Defence Science Service (IDSS), embracing both defence and civilian scientists, on the lines of the then Government Scientific Service in the U.K. This, he thought, was necessary as it would set the seal on the objectives for inter-service action in research and development, function as a machinery for determining satisfactory conditions of service for defence scientists, give *esprit de corps* to those taking up the new vocation in India, and be of the greatest value in attracting scientists to Defence Science careers.

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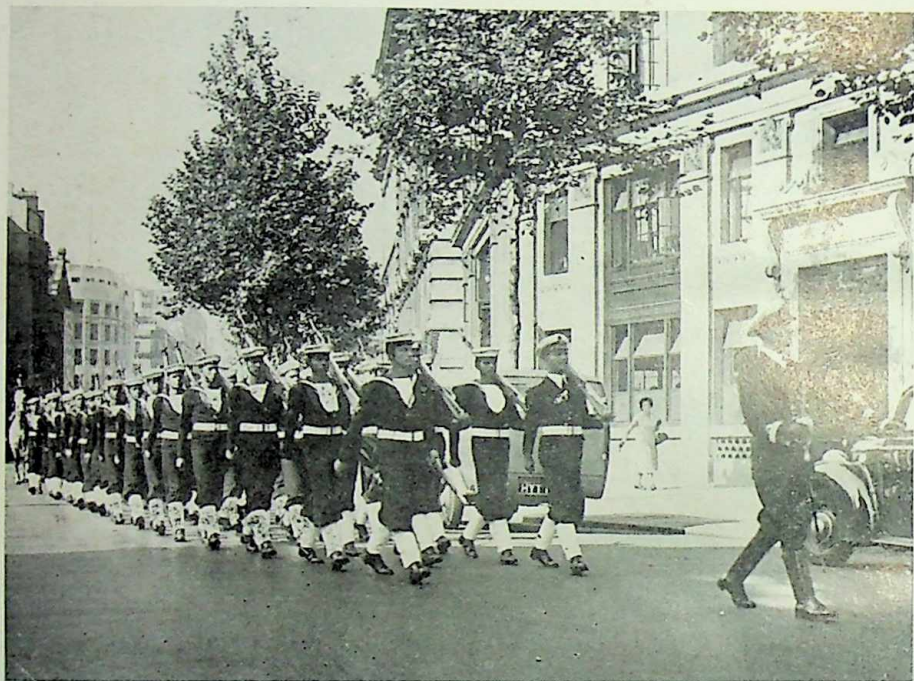
The Royal Indian Marine Ensign being hauled down on October 2, 1934 at Bombay on the occasion of the conversion of the Service into the Royal Indian Navy. The building at left is the RIM Officers' Mess which now houses the Naval Dockyard Canteen, the Dockyard Apprentice School and the Dockyard Dispensary. Photograph : courtesy Rear Admiral A. Chakraverti (retd.).



The Indian Navy Guard led by Lieutenant R. K. S. Gandhi, marching to India House on the Indian Independence Day celebrations at London on August 15, 1949.



King's Colour presented to the Royal Indian Navy on December 9, 1935 at Bombay being laid down in December 1949 at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. Lieutenant R.S. Malia is seen handing over the Colour to the Commandant. Also seen in the picture are the Defence Minister, Shri Baldev Singh, the Commander-in-Chief, Indian Army, General K.M. Cariappa and the Commander-in-Chief, Royal Indian Navy, Vice Admiral Sir Edward Parry. Photograph: courtesy Commodore R.S. Malia (retd.).



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who went to see Panditji who was the Prime Minister at that time. We did express our feeling that this particular change was unnecessary. Panditji then quoted chapter and verse from British History and said that the Royal Navy may have been the senior Service under the British conditions because of which the Royal Indian Navy too had become the senior Service in India but under Indian conditions and for reasons of our history, the role played by the Army and the place of the Army in Indian history was much more important and both the size and the past history of India were different from that of the United Kingdom. Under Indian conditions, therefore, it was more appropriate that the Army should be designated as the senior Service. In fact, as far as history was concerned, you couldn't teach Panditji very much."¹

Since the change in the Order of Seniority was to take place on our first Republic Day, January 26, 1950, there was considerable confusion during the rehearsals and even on the actual day of the Republic Day parade on the relative positioning of the contingents from the three Services. Lieutenant Commander Inder Singh (later rose to rank of Commodore) reminisces, "A contingent consisting of two officers, viz., I and Lieutenant R.N. Das Gupta (who retired as a Commander), and some ratings left Cochin by rail early in January 1950 to take part in the first Republic Day parade to be held on the 26th of the month. For reasons of my pride in my Service, the journey and what transpired at the end of it turned into one of the most eventful ones in my life.

"The train journey from Cochin had its own tale to tell. Confusion at the booking office at Madras Central led to the detachment of the special coach carrying us from the rest of the train en route at Balharshah. The result was that for once we were forcibly separated from, to use a naval expression, the teeth, i.e., our swords and rifles which were in the brake van. A difficult situation was thus created by the Railways for a body of young officers and men from a fighting Service for, after all, to suddenly become 'toothless' is not a very pleasant experience but, to our great relief, the 'teeth' were restored to us at New Delhi Railway Station when we arrived there.

"The venue chosen for the parade was the Irwin Stadium, which was to be later renamed the National Stadium, and there we assembled every morning for participating in the rehearsals with the contingents from the other two Services. The officer nominated for leading the parade was Brigadier J.S. Dhillon, who later retired as an Army Commander.

"After the usual individual warming up and working up period, we had our first joint parade around January 7, 1950 and to my horror and consternation, the Navy found itself placed after the last contingent of the Army and our two columns in their Navy blue regalia looked absurdly small after the sea (land!) of Khaki! My protest to the Brigadier in charge of the parade at this relegation from the Navy's pride of place was not taken seriously and we continued to fall in next to the Army contingents. My protest was repeated a second time with a stronger feeling of having been wronged but

no remedial measures were forthcoming. I then brought it to the notice of the Staff Officer, Gunnery at the Naval Headquarters and our Liaison Officer, Lieutenant M.R.A. Rao but they too did not react one way or the other as either they did not realise the implication of our down-gradation or did not consider it important enough to be conveyed to the senior staff officers at Naval Headquarters. Our frustration grew worse and on the day of the third or fourth combined rehearsal, when the same pattern followed, I brought it to the notice of Commander S.M. Nanda, the then Director of Personnel Services at Naval Headquarters.

“Commander Nanda informally advised me to abstain from the parade if the order of precedence on parade was not rectified. I conveyed this intention to the Lieutenant Colonel who officiated during the absence of the Brigadier at the parade rehearsals. To my utter chagrin, he too did not take it seriously or, may be, they were testing our patience!

“Naval Headquarters at this stage took a serious view of the development and directed the Director of Personnel Services to be present at the rehearsals and final parade.

“After this, things moved fast. At the next rehearsal, I repeated my warning to the Lieutenant Colonel before forming up for the parade but once again our protestations were ignored and we were ordered to fall in as we had been doing during our previous rehearsals.

“I therefore, decided to act. We had formed up and the usual practice march past was about to commence when I spotted Commander Nanda arriving on the scene. Inspired by his presence, in a dramatic flourish, I ordered the entire Naval contingent to march forward in ‘advance order’ and moved off the parade ground but not out of the National Stadium!

“Absolute panic seized the officers in charge of the parade! Men ran helter-skelter and Brigadier Dhillon arrived within 15 minutes followed by Lieutenant General S.M. Shrinagesh, then GOC-in-C, Western Command. After brief consultations, they decided to request us to rejoin the parade but this time in the lead, and that was where we stayed until the final parade was over.

“This, however, was a short-lived victory as on the day of the final parade, i.e., January 26, 1950, a signal was issued conveying the decision of the government to make the Army the Senior Service from that day. I had, therefore, had the unique privilege of leading a naval contingent at the head of a national parade for the last time, an occasion that still arouses mixed feelings in me.”³

On India’s becoming a sovereign republic, the designation of “Royal” was dropped from titles of the various regiments possessing it, as also from the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force. India had already instituted its own awards for gallantry, to replace the British awards.

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Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh joined the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve, the Wavy Navy as it is popularly known, in June 1941 as a Sub-Lieutenant and retired in 1977. He has witnessed the transition of the Navy from coal-fired ships to gas turbines; from conventional armaments to the present-day guided missiles; from communication by pigeons to the present-day satellites.

He has held various afloat and staff appointments and served both in the Military and Intelligence Wings of the Cabinet Secretariat for 11 years. The Military Wing provided the Secretariat for various committees of higher Defence control including the Defence Committee of the Cabinet presided over by the then Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. His last appointment was Member Secretary, Joint Intelligence Committee which he held for seven years.

The author contributes regularly to national dailies on topical subjects, both civil and military. His intrinsic contribution to the cause of ex-Servicemen's welfare is known throughout the country.