

# Contents

## 27

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and

V Adm HCS Bisht, AVSM

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### Published By

Directorate of Ex-Servicemen Affairs

6th Floor, Chanakya Bhawan,

Yashwant Palace,

Chanakya Puri, New Delhi - 110 021

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### Production

Indu Cards & Graphics

9811419531

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Opinions expressed are those of the authors. They do not reflect the views of IHQ, MoD (Navy), Navy Foundation or the Editor.



**एडमिरल डी के जोशी**

पी वी एस एम, ए वी एस एम, वाई एस एम, एन एम, वी एस एम, ए डी सी

**नौसेनाध्यक्ष**

**Admiral DK Joshi**

PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM, ADC

**Chief of the Naval Staff**

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### **MESSAGE**

It is a matter of profound pleasure to share my thoughts on a range of issues through this expressive magazine. I am delighted that the magazine, over a period, has become a much sought after platform to provide glimpses of reminiscences and musings from the veterans and serving, as also introspective reflections.

We, the present baton holders of this fine service, are grateful to the veterans for inheriting *IN's* fine traditions, its legacy and working environment. Navy continues to benefit from the experience and advice of its veterans.

I am confident that we are well on course to consolidate our position amongst advanced Navies of the world, while steadily honing our capabilities. In order to meet the growing maritime challenges in a highly technology intensive scenario with optimal usage of national resources, the theme for the year 2014 has been aptly selected as "Indian Navy - Maritime Security Through Self-Reliance". Further, to match the technological leap with quality manpower, the Navy has redefined and realigned its 'Human Capital Strategy'. The focus is to enhance Navy's maritime capabilities with induction of indigenous/acquired platforms and operate them with highly professional and competent manpower.

After decades of struggle, we finally have possession of the requisite land for the construction of our own 'Nau Sena Bhavan' in the national capital. Thus, the next generation of the Navy will soon have a state-of-the-art Headquarters building in the heart of the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) Zone.

Apart from many issues concerning our veterans and their families, pension related issues have been a major concern. To address this issue more efficiently, Naval Pension Office (NAVPEN) has been setup at INS Tanaji, Mankhurd, Mumbai, which will function as a single-window agency on pension matters of officers and sailors.

It is indeed heartening to note that all charters of Navy Foundation are well networked, which in turn has synergised the activities of the veterans. Conduct of the maiden Admiral RL Pereira memorial lecture by NF Bangalore Charter is yet another step in this effort. We plan to place the NF charters under Commands, as per their geographical locations shortly. This, apart from facilitating administrative ease, is likely to cut down on lead time involved in resolving local issues.

My warm wishes and felicitations to the Editorial Team of "Quarterdeck 2014" and I hope the magazine will continue to enrich us by sharing our views and experiences.

Shano Varuna! Jai Hind.



(DK Joshi)  
Admiral  
Chief of the Naval Staff



### About the Cover



*A Black Panther surveys his future playground.*

*Vikramaditya and Viraat – embodiments of our formidable Navy.*



*Lt Cdr Abhilash Tomy triumphantly returns after circumnavigating the globe.*

It gives me immense pleasure to present to you the 27<sup>th</sup> Edition of Quarterdeck. The year gone by was momentous in many ways. After 165 years, the curtain came down on the era of 'Telegrams' which had rendered yeoman service across the world, and were for a long time the fastest means of communication. Commodore BR Prakash has presented a naval perspective on this means of communication.

The year witnessed the completion of 151 days of non-stop solo circumnavigation of the globe under sails by Lt Cdr Abhilash Tomy aboard *Mhadei*. He became the first Indian and only 79<sup>th</sup> individual globally to undertake this challenging mission. On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013, the President of India was present at the Gateway of India to welcome the national hero. We present to you a first-hand account of this unprecedented achievement by Lt Cdr Abhilash Tomy himself.

The Diamond Jubilee of Indian Naval Aviation was celebrated with befitting pomp and show at Goa on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2013. There could be no better script for the jubilee year, when naval aviation was reinvigorated by the induction/commissioning of the MiG 29K Squadron, P8Is and Vikramaditya. Readers would relish the linked reminiscences as recorded in this edition by some veteran aviators and their several ardent fans.

Our hearts go out to the families of all those who were tragically affected by the misfortune on *Sindhurakshak*. A most touching and emotional tribute penned by Lt Cdr Nikhil Phillipose is carried in this edition. In addition, we carry a dispassionate and forthright articulation by a pioneering and illustrious submariner who rose to the pinnacle, Admiral VS Shekhawat (Retd).

I regret my inability to accommodate several contributions received either on themes or subjects not conforming to those approved by IHQ, MoD (Navy), or received late. But, I am truly thankful for the overwhelming response from the contributors, whom I would like to assure, that their contributions are safe and perhaps would find a place in the next edition.

I would like to record my utmost gratefulness to Vice Admiral Ganesh Mahadevan (Retd) who continues to enrich Quarterdeck with caricatures, despite his several personal commitments.

Most importantly, I wish to record my sincere gratitude to PDESA and his able Staff for all possible help to make this edition of Quarterdeck happen.

Last, but not the least, I wish to thank all avid readers and admirers of Quarterdeck for their continued encouragement, inspiration, and assistance in many ways. I wish you all good health, cheer and happiness, always.



# Sea Harrier's 30 Year Saga - The Beginning

Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd)



The morning of 13<sup>th</sup> December 1983 dawned cold, grey and misty, with the sun vainly struggling to brighten the Somerset sky. But on this day, the typically gloomy British weather could not dampen my spirits because I had sunny Goa on my mind; yesterday's calculations showed that it was a 'mere' 5427 miles away.

A fortnight earlier, as the IN Detachment (INDET) at Yeovilton celebrated the successful completion of No.1 Sea Harrier Operational Flying Training (OFT) course, the first question that arose was: what was the fastest way of getting our 'jump-jets' home, where Mother (INS *Vikrant*) awaited her fighters anxiously. Options of sea-freight, air-freight and ferry-flight were furiously debated between the INDET, Naval Attaché, London, British Aerospace (BAe) and NHQ. We finally managed to persuade everyone that the ferry option would be the fastest, cheapest and most

convenient. Of the three No.1 OFT pilots, Lt. Shekhar Sinha (currently CINC, West) had to stay back for an instructional course; so it was Lt Cdr Sanjoy Gupta, Mr. Taylor Scott (a BAe test pilot) and I, who would ferry the first lot of Sea Harriers.

Having arisen early that morning, as I packed some bare essentials in an aircrew-bag I marveled at how the past 20 months had gone by in a flash. For us this was to be the last leg





of a journey that had, actually, commenced when Shekhar and I arrived at Heathrow in the spring of 1982 as the advance-guard of INAS 300. For our brand new Sea Harriers, FRS Mk.1, it was to be the beginning of a new journey in Indian colours. As I contemplated the prospect of the flight home, many kaleidoscopic images flashed across the mind's eye.....

Within hours of arrival in the UK on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1982 we received a 'warm welcome', consisting of an hour-long dunking in the icy waters of the English Channel for sea survival training. Later, as I accepted a mug of brandy-laced coffee from an RAF Sergeant, I grumbled, mildly, at this rough treatment. With a broad grin, he assured me that one day we would be grateful to him. Little did I realize that the day was not far-off.

On UK, MoD's insistence we had to undergo an Air Traffic Orientation course on the Jet Provost trainer prior to Harrier conversion. By a coincidence, the course was being conducted at RAF Brawdy; the exact place where, INAS 300 had been commissioned in July 1960! Shekhar and I felt the full weight of history as we took to the same skies where our distinguished predecessors had flown Sea Hawks, 22 years ago. Located on the Welsh coast, Brawdy boasted of 300 bad-weather days in a year, but our course was progressing well till my aircraft, one day, suffered sudden engine failure during a low-level navigation sortie. With insufficient height and few other options, I and the accompanying RAF pilot had to eject – as luck would have it – over a lake in the Welsh mountains. The parachutes barely had time to open when we landed in the chilly water; and I was soon exercising my newly-acquired sea-survival skills. Within an hour we were winched up by a SAR Sea King and dropped in hospital. Mild hypothermia cured, I was flying again in a few days.

Three months later, Shekhar and I were delighted as we graduated from the RAF Harrier Operational Conversion Unit, in RAF Wittering. The grueling course had tested our flying skills as well as mental toughness and airmanship in equal measure. The RAF Harrier GR Mk.3 that we flew was a revelation; hundreds of hours in conventional aircraft, including a helicopter conversion, had not prepared us for the bizarre sensation of hovering or moving sideways and backwards in a thundering jet-fighter! The powerful Pegasus engine delivered 22,000 pounds of thrust and the Harrier's four vectoring-nozzles enabled it to not only take-off and land at any speed from zero to 180 knots but also out-turn anything that flew (as the Argentineans found out in the Falklands).

My personal test commenced when I took over as O i/c INDET in March 1983, at the RN Air Station, Yeovilton. Our four-fold task was to, concurrently: (a) undertake delivery-acceptance of new Sea Harriers from BAe (b) conduct operational flying-training for pilots (c) undertake intensive flying-trials on the aircraft and (d) conduct on-job training of maintainers.

The challenge of settling a 250-strong Indian community, including families, into sleepy Somerset villages without creating a social upheaval seemed a daunting task, but I was delighted to find that the natural charm of our sailors had soon won over most of their land-ladies! Our performance in sports and warm Indian hospitality extended during the anniversary Bara Khana won us many friends in the RN air station. A small team of RN/RAF personnel, on loan, provided invaluable assistance in all my tasks.

Most of us had some familiarity with radars, but to operate the tiny Blue Fox in the cockpit and search for targets, while simultaneously



flying a 'curve of pursuit', was quite a challenge. We learnt this art, by day and by night, along with other skills like air-combat, rocketing, bombing, air-to-air gunnery and photo-reconnaissance. The treacherous weather and dense UK air traffic were added ordeals. Our maintenance crews, too, learnt fast and rose admirably to every occasion with élan.

The Yeovilton ski-jump prepared us for the big day when HMS Hermes was made available to the INDET for DLQs (deck-landing qualifications). We rendezvoused the venerable Falklands veteran off Portsmouth on a foggy July morning, and while the pilots spent the day practicing radar approaches, vertical landings and ski-jump launches, our ground crew familiarized with the ship. Little did we realize that the *Hermes* was destined to become INS *Viraat*, just a few years later.

The Yeovilton weather remained kind, and thanks to a lot of hard work by our maintenance crews we managed to complete No.1 OFT by end-November. As the INDET prepared to

commence No. 2 OFT, the homeward-bound crew, started flight-planning and tackling en-route issues.

The longest leg of the ferry route (avoiding Pakistan) was from Abu Dhabi to Dabolim, a 1410- mile stretch over the Arabian Sea; well beyond the Sea Harrier's max range. NHQ had fortunately acquired the 330-gallon ferry-tanks which could boost the aircraft range to about 1500 miles. The problem was that the monstrous size of the ferry-tanks made aircraft-handling rather tricky; and required an unusually high-speed take-off and landing. Moreover, if one of the tanks stopped feeding the resultant imbalance could lead to serious control problems. A few trial sorties gave us enough confidence in the ferry tanks and in ourselves.

There were two other issues. One, related to diplomatic clearances/permissions for overflying eight countries en-route and landing in three. Since they were valid only for 12-24 hours, any unforeseen delays could cause further holdups and embarrassment. Secondly,





at our cruise-altitude of about 40,000 feet, the Pegasus would require a fuel-additive to prevent engine-icing. This required a special trolley to be pre-positioned at each fuelling halt. These and other issues were sorted out without too much fuss, and 13<sup>th</sup> December saw INAS 300 lining the dispersal to cheer as three Sea Harriers taxied out; homeward bound.

The first leg saw us climbing right across France, on course for Malta, casting anxious glances at the fuel gauges. A gauge dropping now would mean that one of the ferry-tanks was not feeding – and the aircraft would need to turn back! Fortunately all went well and overhead Marseilles we entered the Mediterranean. Two hours after departure we overflew Sicily, to be handed over to Malta Control and all three Harriers landed at Luqa airport off long, shallow approaches with half-flaps. Bad news awaited us; the anti-icing trolley had not arrived.

14<sup>th</sup> December was spent making anxious enquiries, with BAe headquarters and the airport, about the lost trolley. Another trolley was located and delivered in Malta by a Company aircraft; late enough for us to undertake refueling and servicing by torch-light. The 24 hour delay had not affected our clearances and we made an early departure on 15<sup>th</sup> morning. An hour into the second leg, of just over 1200 miles, we could see the coast of North Africa, and after a boring transit over the Libyan and Egyptian deserts, the ancient city of Luxor hove into view. Boredom, however, vanished at the sight of an approaching sandstorm in the far distance. The Egyptians, equally worried about the approaching *Khamsin*, helped us with a quick turn-around and we were airborne within an hour.

No sooner did we enter Saudi Arabian airspace, just a short hop across the Red Sea, that we met a Saudi AWACS which, for the next

2½ hours, kept vectoring pairs of F-15s to keep watch on our formation. The Saudi escort allowed us carefree navigation over the featureless Arabian Desert and we were sorry to bid them farewell! Minutes after leaving Riyadh Control we had landed in Abu Dhabi.

Having grown a beard in the UK, this was my last chance to resume normal appearance (in conformity with my identity card) before reaching India. That evening I quickly shaved in my hotel room and came down to join my companions, Sanjoy and Taylor Scott, for dinner. At first, both pretended not to recognize me, but even after I had re-identified myself, they impertinently refused to acknowledge my presence. Finally, I had to pull rank and call them to order!



The final leg was a little fraught for more than one reason. Firstly, the Sea Harrier's navigational computer (all of 32 kilobytes) was, by today's standards, somewhat primitive, and unforeseen winds could induce large errors. Secondly, a major emergency en-route could find us sitting in a rubber dinghy in the Arabian Sea (subsequently we learnt that a destroyer commanded by Captain PS Das had been sailed on SAR duty; but no one told us!). And finally, the anticipation of returning home after nearly two years was causing palpable excitement! As a measure of prudence, we had



aimed to make landfall about 20 miles north of Dabolim, and it was gratifying to see, after two and a quarter hours of featureless sea and sky and eerie radio-silence, the outlines of Cabo, Raj Niwas looming out of the haze.

After that, things became one big blur; I recall a vintage Sea Hawk piloted by Cdr. Ulhas Bapat rising to escort us, the formation calling “finals, four greens” and as we had taxied into the dispersal, a warm welcome awaiting us by the CNS and other dignitaries. Five days later, we were operating from *Vikrant’s* flat deck, along with the Alizes and Chetaks.

13<sup>th</sup> December 2013 would mark three decades of the Sea Harrier in Indian service;

with about a dozen of the original 28 aircraft still fully operational. I am told that with their Israeli radar and missile the IN pilots strike terror amongst the Su-30 squadrons! By the time this appears in print it is possible that Sea Harriers would have also operated from the deck of *INS Vikramaditya*, alongside the MiG-29Ks. This is a good juncture to recall that a few Cassandras in the UK had predicted a brief career for the Sea Harrier in Indian hands, because it was a “difficult aircraft to fly and maintain”.

It has been a long journey indeed for the Sea Harrier – and it is not quite over yet.

arunp2810@yahoo.com

## 60 Years of Naval Aviation

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Indian Navy celebrated the diamond jubilee of its aviation wing on May 11, 2013 with the commissioning of its first shipboard MiG-29K combat-jet squadron in Goa. The aircraft has been acquired to be deployed on the aircraft carrier *INS Vikramaditya*.



Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command described the occasion as a proud

moment for the Indian Navy for the impending transformation into a formidable force in the coming years.

The Indian Navy had received some 20 of the 45 MiG-29K aircraft ordered from Russia. They would form INAS 303 Black Panthers Squadron.

Defence Minister, Shri AK Antony, Admiral D.K. Joshi, CNS and top officers of the three armed forces and the defence ministry were present on the occasion.

The Indian Navy has received the first of its eight Boeing P8-I Maritime Surveillance and Anti-Submarine Warfare aircraft. In the coming years, the number of aircraft (all types) should double to more than 400. The Navy, in fact, has plans for about 500 aircraft and helicopters of various types. The Navy is looking at a minimum of 100 combat aircraft while those of the P8-I type should range from 20 to 24. Twelve of these are already in the pipeline.



The Indian Navy’s Fleet Air Arm was created with the induction of Sealand amphibians and the commissioning of the first air station, INS Garuda at Cochin on May 11, 1953.

Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Naval Aviation commenced with a seminar on “Lessons from the past to forge a potent air arm for the future”.

A galaxy of naval aviators led by stalwarts such as Admiral (Retd) RH Tahiliani, the first Indian Navy officer to land on a carrier and rise to become the first aviator Chief of the Naval Staff, gathered at INS Hansa, Goa to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Naval Aviation.

The keynote address at the seminar, was delivered by Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Naval Command. He said in the past 60 years, Indian Naval Aviation has transformed from humble beginnings to a force capable of baring its fangs in full-fledged maritime conflict far from our shores”.

Admiral (Retd) Arun Prakash spoke on the theme “A look at the wake before the great leap forward”. He stressed upon the criticality of drawing lessons from the past to propel naval

aviation into a powerful future. He highlighted four specific areas spanning materiel, manpower, carrier design and self-reliance. Speaking about “Ground Barricades to Air Efficacy- A field perspective” Vice Admiral AK Chopra, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Eastern Naval Command, stressed the need for an all-round review encompassing organisational structures, infrastructure and human resource management to truly realise the transformational potential of new inductions in naval aviation. Rear Admiral AR Karve, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, spoke on “Integration of Potent Air Assets into Maritime Operations of the Future”.

Borne as a fledgling aviation arm of a small Navy, Naval Aviation quickly grew to become the centre piece of Indian Navy’s combat power. Envisioned by bold and wise leaders, an aircraft carrier capable Navy has grown from strength to strength with its aviation arm proving its prowess over the last sixty years. From a fledgling arm with a mere six amphibian aircraft, the arm has grown exponentially over the last sixty years to operate over 200 aircraft including fighters, Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft, helicopters and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles as well. A truly potent and capable naval aviation!



# SOLO

*Lieutenant Commander Abhilash Tomy, KC*



effect not only on the big voyage that I had been planning but also on life in general. I turned vegetarian on my own and I gradually began to discard the comforts that land had to offer preferring instead to lead a Spartan life. I shifted bag and baggage into the boat and ended up living in it for 11 months in the most Spartan way possible.

I had my first experience of solo sailing in the first half of 2011 when I skippered the Mhadei from Cape Town to Goa in a voyage lasted 33 days and saw me rounding the dreaded Cape of Good Hope (better known as the Graveyard of Ships) for the second time, negotiating gale force headwinds around the Agulhas and the trades followed by the first brunt of that year's monsoons in the Arabian Sea. It had not been an easy beginning because within the first four days the generator and the galley had caught fire, I had torn a sail and partly lost self steering because of issues with the wind instruments. Sailing upwind in gale force winds for days and constant breakdowns in the boat was bound to wreak havoc in my mind and that is what happened because it went into a spiral of negative thoughts that threatened to drill a hole in the boat. It did take a lot of effort but by the eighth day my mind had come under control and the rest of the voyage turned out to be a blissful experience. After the first human contact a little over a month later I had undergone a sea change that was bound to have a telling

My big sail around the world began on 01 Nov 2012 but by then I had already spent more than three years in preparation to survive and sail alone in a voyage that could last for almost 200 days at a stretch. What transpired in the course of the voyage had been what I had exactly anticipated, just that there was a big difference between anticipation and actually living through it. It had been a sail through all the weather zones in the planet, a voyage in which the boat and I regularly faced winds that could blow "roofs off the top of houses" or "dogs off their chains", waves that would easily tower over a four storey building, temperatures that would vary from 4-40 degrees, unending rains, days of fogs, areas of harsh sunlight to remote regions where the sun would show itself only once a month, seas that would put on a psychedelic display of lighting as the boat sailed through it, the threat of icebergs breaking lose from the Antarctic Continent and of wayward whales, shipping and fishing. I did cut the voyage short by almost 50 days but then 150 days of keeping constant watch coupled



with lack of sleep and exhaustion from strenuous physical work could at any point in time break me mentally and become the reason for hallucinations or cause me to commit that one mistake that would bring the voyage to a grinding halt

I would get but 3-4 hours of sleep on a good day, none of it at a stretch, and I continued life aboard this tiny boat which had become a washing machine of sorts whose control knob that had no delicate setting. At times heavy work in the heat would bring in nausea and headache and on the other extreme severe cold would cause burns. As I stepped into the Pacific I decided to bathe in sea water for one final time before hitting the screaming 50s but it ended up numbing me because I had never experienced water at 4 degrees on my body. Consequently, I went without a bath for almost 50 days across the Pacific and the Atlantic all the way up to Cape of Good Hope. A passing storm once tore a sail and almost ripped the mast off and as I was nearing the end of the voyage, severe diesel contamination both in water tanks and bottled water threatened to prematurely end the voyage.

In the evening of 31 March 2013 when I crossed the first set of buoys at the mouth of Mumbai



harbour I was putting an end to the voluntary solitude that I had imposed on myself for the last 150 days. What I had endured on my own volition was something that very few on this planet have experienced- the unadulterated terror and bliss of sailing around the world, without stops, without help, without replenishment, without any human company and without any meaningful means of rescue had things gone wrong. For every sight I saw and event I experienced that I can relate to a landlubber who might even begin to understand my story I have seen many more that I cannot describe because I don't have the necessary means to and more than that because they would be subject to misinterpretation.

The voyage took me through parts of the globe





that are so terrifying and remote that they are regularly regarded by sailors as being without rules, without laws, without gods and at times without common sense. I lost a good eleven kilos of body weight and even after seven months normal sleep pattern is yet to set in.

There have been 78 others like me on this planet who have successfully completed such a mission but what we forget to remember is that for every successful sailor there have been many others who have never completed their attempt, wrecked their boats and lives, have contemplated and at times committed suicide, or they were simply lost at sea and their bodies



never found. Many of them who have returned have come back as mental wrecks and many have been straight away carted off to mental hospitals. The case of Donald Crowhurst- a man who attempted a solo and non stop circumnavigation in 1968 but ended cooking up fantastic reports without ever leaving the Atlantic and eventually committing suicide- is perhaps the best known. Like Robin's voyage, solo circumnavigations, have always been a story of mental, physical and moral courage of the solitary sailor in the face of some of the worst terrors that man can

experience. And for the many who have crossed the threshold, it is also the tale of an overpowering sense of bliss, solitude and the loss of meaning to life on shore, exemplified in the likes of Bernard Moitessier who chose not to return to harbor but sail twice around the world instead of going down the pages of history as the first non-stop, solo circumnavigator.

Life flipped a day after my official reception. I was surrounded by people who sought attention and information, people who wanted to know what I ate and how I drank and how I lived my life in a nation that very few of my countrymen knew about. Even the strange way in which I washed clothes made it to many news channels. I caused roadblocks whenever I would get out of my car and there was a never-ending stream of visitors at home, some of whom even touched my feet in reverence. All in all, there was not a moment when I would be left alone and I let it all pass as if it were a motion picture happening in front of my eyes, something that I could only watch but not be involved with.

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# The Bird and the Beast

*Rear Admiral R Gaikwad*

One fine morning, I was with my parents and visiting the Kaziranga game reserve. Sitting on an elephant I was watching two Rhinos grazing nearby. Looking up in the sky I could see an eagle too. How these two, the bird and the beast came to form a part of my life later was not known then. I wanted to fly like the eagle. That was in 1963 and 50 years later I relived my dream when I had the golden opportunity to fly in a SU 30 MKI of the 30 Squadron for 40 minutes from No 2 Wing, Air Force at Pune. Coincidentally the flying area was over NDA, Khadakvasla where forty years ago I started my training for a career in the Indian Navy. Looking from 8 km above and travelling at 1000 kmph I stared outside the huge glass canopy thinking how these years passed. The feeling was nostalgic as the sortie reminded me of my visit to Kaziranga many years ago where I dreamt of flying high like an eagle.

It was a sunny morning, and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2013 started with a flying demonstration at the Air Force Station. The course participants of the 53<sup>rd</sup> NDC were spell bound with the fighters taking off and landing in the runway right ahead. As the SDS i/c of the NDC delegation I too was awestruck when the SU 30s roared and took off with full thrust and re-heats on. The highlight of the demonstration was a low level aerobatic

display by a single SU 30 MKI. The versatile aircraft flown by an equally versatile and qualified flying instructor showed us how maneuverable, awesome and powerful this machine was. We saw the aircraft roll, loop, dive, tail slide, roll off the top and carry out an interception by pulling up, yawing and pointing at the target in a most agile and menacing way and no wonder it is called an “Air Dominance Fighter” or ADF. Its multi role capability as an interceptor, deep penetrating strike aircraft, air defence and electronic warfare aircraft with a range of over 8,000 km and maximum endurance of 10 hours with air to air refueling makes it a force to reckon with. I was truly amazed and was waiting to fly in this potent machine. My Liaison Officer, Wg Cdr Banerjee was visibly proud too as he was from the same squadron.

The time finally came and at 1030, before I was taken to a briefing room, the Station Commander, Air Cmde Surat Singh asked me if I had any flying experience earlier. My thoughts went back to the 60s when my father, who was a Sqn Ldr and a qualified Flying Instructor then, used to explain flying as much as I could understand. I always wanted to be a pilot and fly in the sky like the eagle I saw in Kaziranga. I told him that I had flown in many





aircraft during my long tenure in the Navy, the most exciting being in an Alize from the Vikrant in 1978 where I was posted as a Watch Keeping Officer, but never in a jet fighter aircraft.

The Captain for my sortie was Wg Cdr P Sanjay who conducted my briefing. He explained the many switches, buttons and levers especially those marked in red to never be touched or pulled. I was also briefed on the weather, the exercises and the area of operations and how I was to communicate with him. He also briefed me on the ejection procedure if it had to be executed in an emergency. The four multifunction coloured displays and its operation were explained too and one had to quickly assimilate everything so that during the flight I could be better informed.

After the briefing I put on the flying overalls, boots and the sophisticated 'G' suit. With a modern helmet traditionally tucked in between my left elbow and waist I set out on a confident gait towards the aircraft as pilots always do.

The exciting time was drawing near and I soon found myself climbing up the steps and settling down in the rear seat, all strapped up. The helmet with the visor was then in position and the communication lead was soon connected after which I heard the pilot talking to the ATC and rattling out all the checks he was carrying out prior to starting of the aircraft engines.

After the detailed checks were completed, the pilot started the engines one by one. I could see the engine RPM springing to life as they flickered on the colourful LCD display. Soon the engines warmed up and all the pressures and temperatures were stable. The pilot then asked me for a thumbs up to close the canopy. The sound dropped to a low whine when it closed and I could concentrate more on the four multi function displays in front of me. The display at

my head level was initially showing the view in front of the aircraft as seen through a camera.

After the initial checks got over, the thumbs up was given to taxi to the runway. Visibility was about 5 km and very small clouds in patches were visible. We reached the start of the runway and before lining up some critical checks were carried out by two ground safety staff. Finally, at around 1105 am we started accelerating for a short high powered take off, and within seconds were airborne and climbed at 40 degrees using both reheats. Sanjay was certainly my hero for that day and would be for the years to come.

I was watching the landscape fly past and after take off it was the open blue sky staring at me from ahead. I switched over the main display from TV to HUD and tried to concentrate on the instruments. The pilot talked with me on the intercom and explained what to watch on the instruments. This he did along with the other tasks like communicating with the ATC, navigation and watching his radar other than the main task of flying the aircraft.

Soon we reached our exercise area. The Western Ghats were visible and because of the many times I climbed Sinhgad from NDA on punishment, its sight quickly came into view. Travelling at 800 kmph and with 6 tons of fuel on board, Sanjay, my pilot told me the manoeuvres he would be carrying out as he had explained to me earlier in the briefing room. We started with the loop and that was my first feel of enhanced gravity. The dive from 8 km height sent my blood rushing down but when Sanjay pulled up the joystick to climb I felt the effects of 5.5 G for the first time. This meant my weight had effectively increased 5½ times i.e. to nearly 400 kgs. My hand felt heavy and however much I tried to move my forearm up it just wouldn't. My head and neck also bent forward and down and I just could not





get it up. Within seconds the loop was completed and all seemed normal. I noticed my G suit full of air in the waist and legs when the aircraft was pulling up. There were my first aerobatic manoeuvres and what an awesome experience it was.

The manoeuvres that soon followed were the slow speed run, tail slide, barrel roll, roll off the top, tail chase, falling back manoeuvres and finally a high speed run with a sharp turn and pull up. During these aerobatics the exhilarating feeling of both +ve and -ve G upto 5.5 was one of a lifetime experience.

The manoeuvres took me from 8000 ft to 25000 ft, from 220 to 1000 kmph. All throughout we stayed within our exercise area. This was visible in the navigation display. After the nerve tightening manoeuvres the pilot went on to show me how an accurate bomb attack was carried out. He chose a bridge visible on the synthetic aperture radar display, some 40 km away. The aircraft locked on to the target after initially steering away from the target, it automatically altered course towards it at a predetermined range. The launch bomb signal came on and soon the simulated bomb was on its way for a direct hit. The next was a demonstration of an air interception with an Air to Air missile on a simulated target. This was shown with vengeance and the aircraft was manoeuvred deftly by the pilot and soon the enemy was caught in the cross wires with a lock on.

The R/T squawked and the ATC told us to keep a watch on two SU30 and a civil aircraft approaching Pune. We were advised to keep over 5000 ft and listen on to the R/T. All of a sudden the aircraft swerved and banked to starboard. The pilot was quick to tell me on R/T that we had to alter our heading to keep within our exercise box and apologized for the sudden 5 G imposed. I replied with a thumbs up.

Sanjay soon showed me his both hands up from the front cockpit. He explained that the aircraft was on auto pilot as he had pushed a small white button on his joystick which automatically places the aircraft on level flight.

It was over thirty four minutes and soon the automatic voice alert came on saying that our fuel level was becoming low. The pilot altered course to return to base and later landed with adequate reserve on board.

Whilst approaching the runway we checked in over a computer calculated rejoin point and soon banked to line up with the runway some 12 km ahead. While descending I saw the new Expressway, the Balewadi stadium and the Pimpri general area. The CME campus quickly came into view, and we were descending to land on Runway 10. Both the take off and landing were on an easterly heading into the wind. The landing was very smooth and the parachute along with the brakes ensured quick deceleration. We soon taxied back to our sheltered parking bay where the engines were switched off and the canopy opened. It was a mixed feeling for me, happy that I could sustain the pressure of the sortie and sad that it got over in 40 odd minutes. With wobbly feet and knees I got out of the cockpit and climbed down. It was an awesome 'once in a lifetime' experience. After Sanjay signed the 'handing over' of the aircraft he told me it was an important sortie for him as it was his 500<sup>th</sup> landing in a SU 30 MKI.

I too thought of the importance of this sortie. It was told to me that 30 Sqn is also called the '**Rhinos**' and was recently affiliated with INS Brahmaputra. I remembered commanding the Brahmaputra from Jan 2003 till Jul 2004. It was fondly called the '**Raging Rhino**'. With the memories of the rhinos in Kaziranga flashing back in my mind and the desire to fly as the



dominant eagle above I wondered to myself, some events of life occur not just by coincidence but by destiny. Time brought the events and scenes back. The rhinos were back and so was the feel of flying just like an eagle in the sky. The bird and beast would now be etched in my memory for life. I thanked the pilot Sanjay and the Squadron Commander, Wg Cdr

Gopinath. They too were awestruck by the coincidence. It was an awesome experience which I will never forget. I wish both the **Rhinos'** happy hunting and happy landings'. I salute our pilots who are truly "The magnificent men in **our** flying machines".

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## On a beach by INS Hansa

*Commander N. Lobo (Retd)*

Some sailors in Hansa shirts and white shorts jogging smartly down the road from the Naval Air Station. I learn later from Commander Sunil Kudalkar that his men go out on a run every afternoon. He was not with them because of a suspect ankle which he was checking out that day on the soft sands of Bogmalo beach.

That was where my wife and I accosted him, not knowing who he was." Why are you wearing only one sock?" I asked amicably. Showing me the anklet which he had only just removed, he introduced himself as Commander Sunil Kudalkar of the electrical branch. Surprise, Surprise, so was I till my retirement in 1972.

This brief exchange had a delightful sequel. The next day a Master Chief and two AL Artificers in sparkling white sports rig stunned the staff of the modest guest house where we were staying the night in Bogmalo beach. They were bearing gifts from the Commander: a shirt and a cap, each with the Hansa crest.

Just days before that happy chance of camaraderie, the present Hansa Station Air Electrical Officer Commander Vinayak Mishra and his wife, a serving Naval doctor, had called on us. He had heard on the grapevine that his predecessor of fifty years ago was holidaying at Bogmalo nearby. So I now have two Hansa shirts.

And pleasing too have been the excursions to show us the Naval Coastal battery and a magnificent beach with miles of creamy sand and no people. Back in Pune, we still keep in touch.

To add to these feel good happenings, listen to this: Hearing that we were coming to Goa in March 2012 for a short holiday for the first time, after I had retired in 1972, a former Naval Chief, no less, insists on receiving us at Dabolim airport and driving us to our guest house. And to think that I had never met Admiral Arun Prakash. An occasional postcard from me over the years was always answered in a letter in his own flowing hand and never in an official envelope.

On every subsequent visit to Goa over past few months, he and his wife have almost embarrassed us with their hospitality which we can never return. Fortunately, we have been able to do so to other friends from aviation. R Adm Peter and Joyce Debrass, Commander and Mrs. Vallins D'souza and Vera Verghese whose husband Mohan crashed after leaving the Navy.

It is good to report a family feeling among aviators akin to that prevalent in infantry regiments — and presumably submariners.

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## My Close Ties with the Flybhais

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*Captain Srikant B Kesnur*

It may be taken for granted that most greenhorns in the Navy begin their maritime journey dreaming of becoming aviators, submariners or marine commandos. Of these, the flyboys with their 'brylcreamed' hair, permanent glares and 'walking in the air' personas are the most seductive and, arguably, have the most appeal. In my case, I did not have the same fascination for the winged species but all my close friends were either wannabe aviators or Air Force children, thus I was surrounded by 'udaan' speak at all times. Spurred by such friends and gently goaded by an Observer Commanding Officer on LCU 37, my first independent assignment, I opted for the 'O' course. Thrice in a span of a month or so, I was called for the aviation medicals but on all occasions the flights were cancelled. I took this as an omen that I was not meant to sprout wings and resumed base course in the X (GS) cadre. But while I had let go of Naval Aviation, it had not let go of me and through the rest of my two decades plus in the Navy I have had a very close association with the naval flying fraternity. Needless to say, it has been a most rewarding and interesting association and on their diamond this is a toast from a silent admirer.

My first close association was just after my long course when I was the EWO of INS Ganga in the early nineties when the Fleet Strength was perilously low and, at best, was made of a couple each of Godavari class, SNFs and Khukri class corvettes. But we were redeemed in great measure by the availability of the Seakings and it was not uncommon to have two of them embarked on the G class. Endowed with enormous punch and equipped with the latest gizmos, these were the halcyon days of

the 'Flying Frigates' at their peak efficiency and I was fortunate to have interacted with some of the best and brightest of the lot during those two years. As the EWO, I was in competition with them squaring my EW system against theirs; as the Action and SSD OOW, I was often coordinating with them; and as an inliving officer I was sharing cabin and wardroom space with their younger lot. Not all of them were epitomes of diplomacy and there were scraps galore with each of us fiercely protecting our turf, but to a man they were a bunch of fine professionals and proud fliers. No task was undoable and no ask went unanswered. The ship was equipped with state of the art EW, ASW and Nav sensors and so were the Seakings, thus tactical exercises were fecund with possibilities of expanding the envelope and many discussions were enriched by the contributions of the 'Harpoons' as they are called. This association continued on board the INS Delhi where I was the commissioning SCO and we had a full-fledged Seaking crew on board, many of them old mates. This time, the challenges were different and related to typical post-commissioning issues but, like before, with a bird on our deck we felt most assured and confident. Delhi was deployed to many foreign ports as part of defence diplomacy initiatives and the Seakings were frequently our 'show off' weapons.

A couple of years later, after my Staff Course, I landed in the Indian Naval Tactical Evaluation Group (INTEG) where began a close association with the 'Cobras' or the Dornier boys. This was a time of another significant shift in our EW operations with the Indian manufactured Dorniers now equipped with next generation sensors. In parallel, the concept of



dedicated EW Op Support was gaining salience at INTEG and I was part of the venture. Once again, the excitement of operating with new equipment and brainstorming over new ideas engendered a close and collaborative relationship. This was also the time of many new ship inductions, IFR 2001 and the general air of optimism that pervaded the country at the beginning of a new century and that 'zeitgeist' was reflected in our approach to operations. Years later, more recently, as the DA in Seychelles, I was also associated with the deployment of a Dornier there to support Seychelles in policing of her waters. A new generation of 'Cobras' was now at the helm but the commitment was just the same and it was no surprise that the Seychellois were deeply impressed by their professional and personal conduct.

In QD 11, I have written about my aircraft carrier experiences (admittedly limited) as the FCO of the Western Fleet which while not being in the same category as doing a tenure on board enabled me to see Fleet air operations from close range. My next close association was formed on INS Vindhyagiri which I took over in July 2004 and which had been fitted with the UAV afloat control station after India had just inducted UAVs. Being unique to the Vindhyagiri and Taragiri it fell upon us along with the UAV squadron to devise the operating procedures and exploitation doctrines. In the process, we were not only able to make sense of a new paradigm but also achieve amazing results. The UAV officers were a different breed – esoteric in their tastes, 'cool' in their demeanour and, sometimes, at odds with the prevailing modes of thinking. But they were as proprietarily possessive of their birds as any other pilot and ever willing to explore innovative ways to establish new benchmarks. Despite many of them not being 'career officers' there

was never any let up in their professional output or pride. I am proud to have been part of the first ever tactical deployment of UAVs where we achieved many other firsts and even happier when a few days later they were commissioned as the first UAV squadron and I was among the invited guests.

Six years later, I found myself posted to the aviator Mecca aka Goa, albeit 40km north of them, at the newly shifted Naval War College. This brief interregnum enabled me to not only meet old friends but also enabled me a brief peep into the aviator psyche, their unique social fabric and their distinctive attitude to life. And a few months ago, I landed at Vizag to command INS Jalashwa and in the process be closely associated with another embarked squadron the INAS 350 comprising the UH 3H helicopters which are unique to this ship. Endowed with fairly bigger deck so as to operate many helicopters simultaneously, the ship functions like a busy air station at sea akin to a mini-carrier. Apart from renewing my operational links with the aviators it has also allowed me to ruminate about the close ties with the fraternity over all these years. While, the tigers and harpoons and their forbears have a long association with 'Mother', it is possible for similar such affiliations to develop between SNFs and Kamovs, UAVs and control ships, INTEG and Dorniers/TUs and indeed Jalashwa and UHs. I have been the beneficiary of multiple such affiliations and pioneering initiatives that have greatly enriched my personal and professional life.

What do aviators bring to the table that is different? Greater safety consciousness, certainly, with their strict adherence to SOPs and laid down Regs, the culture of briefing to get everyone on the same grid, greater understanding and respect for the elements at



sea – wind, weather, atmospheric pressure, a closer knit community probably due to the vicissitudes of fate they face and above all huge professional pride as though belonging to a different creed. They also have, relatively speaking, greater historical consciousness and better archival and record keeping attributes.

For sure, there will also be some gripes about them that we in the Gen service crib about. The certitude with which the cockpit is regarded as the centre of universe, the tendency to think of the INAP as holier than the Constitution of India, the desire among some of them to steer clear of OOD/OOW duties and other such ‘mundane’ tasks and sometimes the barely concealed superciliousness about we the plebeians do give us much scope for leg pulling in the barroom conversations. There are also good-

humoured discussions about whether the ‘safety’ fetish is carried too far in a fluid medium such as ours. But in the larger scheme of things these are necessary creative tensions as the service grows and creates a bunch of committed professionals. Naval Aviation in India has many magnificent achievements and is today regarded as amongst the best in the world because of the way we ‘Fly Navy’.

I write this on a very auspicious occasion. Today, as the Indian Navy inducts its latest and largest combatant the aircraft carrier Vikramaditya Indian Navy and naval aviation take a huge leap into a new yonder. ‘Bhai’ in India is, both, a term of affection for the sibling and awe for the Don. Let me say that my term of endearment ‘Flybhais’ is a bit of both to this unique species. Cheers.

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## Aviation Cadets join the Navy

*Commodore R K Dass (Retd.)*

The Fleet Air Arm had an impending requirement to increase the aircrew strength. In pursuance of this aim, NHQ decided to induct Aviation Cadets. The educational requirement for applicants was science graduates. The cadets would firstly undergo an orientation course at INS Venduruthy/Garuda, followed by flying training with Air Force. Promotion to Midshipman was to be on completion of the basic flying and the Commission on award of the Wings. The officers would do their Sub’s courses and watch keeping ticket at a later date.

On completion of my graduation in mid 1965, I joined the Law College Punjab University as a precursor to joining the family business. Came along the Sept 1965 Indo – Pak war bringing

an immense nationalistic feeling among the youth and a tsunami wave of volunteers to join the defence services and RK Dass was one of them. I attended the SSB at Dehradun to join the navy and thus started a new chapter of life.

The first batch of 8 aviation cadets from various parts of India arrived Cochin Harbour Terminus railway station on a bright and sunny morning of 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 1966. The journey from Delhi to Cochin via Madras (since those days there was no direct train between the two cities) was a literal Bharat darshan, however, the last part from Ernakulam to CHTS was unpleasant due to fish stink. There was a sudden change of weather from the cold winter of north to the tropical weather of Cochin. At the CHTS we



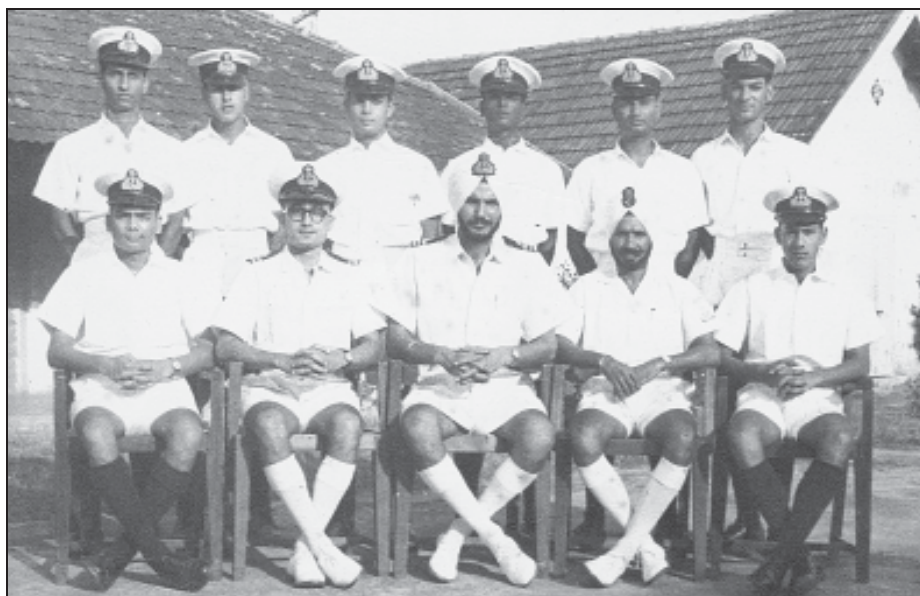
were received by then Petty Officer Mewa Singh Bachal and were hustled in a three tonner, our first ride in the mighty vehicle. The cadets being G S Saxena, S P Singh, T K Mishra, B N Prasad, P K Jain, T S Chauhan, B Bhupaty and R K Dass. Three cadets namely G S Saxena, B N Prasad and T K Mishra had previous flying experience since they had done flying at the civil flying clubs. On arrival at the base we were accommodated in the command mess in the block opposite the old COMCHIN House with Kutty and Rajan as civilian bearers. Our induction in the Navy started with full josh by the Sub Lts undertraining. They taught us the names of the ships and what the COMCHIN, etc. stood for in the usual manner followed in the Academy. We also learnt that rolls had connotations other than spring rolls i.e. front and back. We consoled ourselves by believing that rigors of induction will end when we embark the ship INS Venduruthy. However, to our dismay we learnt that we were already on board the ship Venduruthy and this would be our training center for the next three months.

The next day we were marched off to the barber shop to get the standard crew cut. On 10 Jan, Petty Officer Mewa Singh marched us off to B&D School in civil dress with ties to start the orientation programme. Lt Rajnish was the course officer and Cdr Shaheed Oi/c B&D School. We were kitted up by Dean and Sons Tailor. Besides learning how to march, we also learnt the basics of navy and some seamanship. We were attached to various schools and had the privilege of being addressed by the O i/c's of all the Schools. The rifle drill of Chief GI Banshi Dhar and rounds of the then Gunnery school parade ground with rifle raised above the head are still fresh in the mind. During the dog watches we also got an opportunity to do boat pulling and dinghy sailing. Sailing in the channel to the Sea Lord

hotel jetty was great fun. On completion of training in INS Venduruthy we were attached to INS Garuda for aviation orientation. The first air experience was in the Sealand aircraft at INS Garuda. We were also lucky to get a sea sortie on board the INS Godavari under the Command of then Cdr M K Roy. The 4" shell drill duly supervised by the gunnery officer and the smell of FFO still remains in the mind. The sea sortie was to Trivandrum with a visit to Kanya Kumari as part of ship's picnic. We also had the privilege of attending a reception in honour of the CNS during his visit to Cochin and were specially ushered to be introduced to him. This was the first time in our life that we wore monkey jackets and bow tie, with due guidance from the under trainee Sub Lts.

For the first few days the cadets were attached to the upper yardmen mess but later shifted to the officers mess. We were allowed to open a cash card and were permitted to sign for soft drinks and cigarettes only, we were well looked after by under trainee Sub Lts. We were also guided on the basics of mess etiquettes (use of fork and knife etc). Venduruthy was not much used to cadets and hence this worked to our advantage. Most of the time we got treated as under trainee Sub Lts and also got marks of respect due to officers (since under trainee Sub Lts were also not permitted to wear stripes for the first few weeks). Permission to hire bicycles was a boon. It gave us lot of freedom and enabled us to visit a number of places. One Sunday we had a cycling expedition to Alwaye under the leadership of Lt Rajnish and Petty Officer Mewa Singh. We camped at the riverside of the monastery in Alwaye. We were fortunate not to have lost one of our colleagues who tried to swim across the river despite instructions to the contrary.

For most of us from North, it took some time to



about 1030 hrs. One particular punishment drill was very harsh and resulted in Naval cadet T S Chauhan passing blood with urine which finally led to his withdrawing from flying. We sadly had a mid air collision of two HT 2's during this course resulting in loss of three lives. Out of the eight naval cadets four namely G S Saxena (now late), SP Singh, TK Mishra and BN Prasad cleared the

get used to idli, dosa and filter coffee etc. Once we developed a taste, visits to hotel Woodland became a regular feature. The orientation programme was comprehensive and gave us reasonable knowledge about the navy to be able to stand on our own, whilst with the Air Force.

On completion of the basic naval orientation programme we moved to PTE, Bamrauli, Allahabad to join up with 98<sup>th</sup> course to undergo the flying training. At Allahabad the Sub Lts also joined up which included Arun Prakash, IMS Gill, Rattan Zutshi, NL Chadda, P Jaitley, SP Ray and GS Chahal. Besides the naval officers and cadets, 98<sup>th</sup> flying course consisted of 29<sup>th</sup> NDA flight cadets and direct entry Air Force cadets plus Army Officers. This was the last course being trained at Allahabad and thereafter the training was to shift to EFTU, Bidar. At Allahabad, we were accommodated in the cadets' mess and it was a big difference from the officer like stay in Cochin. The summer in Allahabad is very severe and therefore the major part of flying was carried out in the morning. It used to start at dawn and end by

basic stage got promoted to Midshipmen and went for further training to Jodhpur. NHQ learnt that some naval cadets were not doing too well in ground subjects. This was due to the fact that they were biology students and had not studied Maths and physics upto 12<sup>th</sup> class. Based on this input the entry qualification for the next batches was changed from science graduation to Graduation with Physics and Maths upto 12<sup>th</sup> class.

Only three cadets completed the training successfully and were awarded wings and were promoted to Ag Sub. Lt GS Saxena (now late) joined the 310 Sqn, S P Singh joined the 300 Sqn and T K Mishra joined the 321 flight. I could not complete my flying and rejoined with the November Batch. On completion of my watch-keeping and 9<sup>th</sup> Observers course I joined the 310 Sqn.

This course of naval aviation cadets was followed by a large number of other courses and the aviators from these courses have performed well.

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# The Qualification

*Commander Sureshtha Kumar (Retd.)*

“Don’t you think I am ready to take independent charge now?” I wanted to sound confident, but I knew that I was pleading.

I was given short service commission for seven years by the navy, and wanted to have at least one qualification before leaving.

Anil Charan, six months senior to me, looked at me thoughtfully, “You know Sureshth, officers spend years in the squadron before they get this qualification. Some even become Senior Pilots and are still not fit to do this duty. How many duties you have done so far?”

“Nine.” I replied.

“So, where is the hurry?” Charan said, “A couple of months and another nine or ten duties, and I am sure the Senior Pilot will have no reason to deny you the qualification.”

I felt and looked dejected.

I had set my heart upon becoming ‘The Squadron Duty Officer’.

It sounded so impressive; almost like ‘The Squadron Commander’.

To become the Squadron Commander, you had to have a permanent commission, and a blemishless flying career behind you.

I might as well try for a moon landing!

I think Charan felt pity for me, “All right I shall take you to the Senior Pilot, but don’t let me down.”

The Senior Pilot looked at Charan incredulously, “You mean after just nine duties he can take independent charge?”

Charan had taken the plunge, “Yes sir, I am absolutely sure.”

The senior pilot looked at me thoughtfully, “I have three questions for you:

1) How many men are there in the fire party?

2) If we run out of air for filling up the aircraft tyres, whom do we approach and;

3) What is the full form of ASUCO?

I knew the answer to the first two, but ASUCO?

I knew the song, “Ai, yiyya, karun mein kya suku, suku?” from Jungle; but ASUCO?

Charan did not speak with me for the next 48 hours.

I wanted to offer him drinks to make up, but Charan hated bribery.

With the crowd I was also awarded the qualification: ‘The Squadron Duty Officer’ (SDO).

I was so enamoured with my first qualification in the navy, that even when I became a Squadron Commander many years later, I used to tick off the SDO at the slightest pretext and assume his duties.

No! I never felt ashamed of myself.

I have seen Commander Airs and even Station Commanders getting transformed into SDOs in the presence of the senior officers.

“If the senior officer happened to be an aviator?” You may ask.

Boy! We then had competition on our hands.

“Who is the SDO tomorrow?” The Senior Pilot asked.

I raised my hand. Next day was a Sunday.

“The new Squadron Commander is coming tomorrow; you receive him.” The Senior P. said.

“Yes sir. Which flight is he coming by?” I asked.

“He is not coming by air.”

“Sir, which train?”



“Damn it! He is not coming by train.” The Senior Pilot said impatiently.

“Sir, then how...?”

“He is driving down.”

“Sir, where do I receive him?”

“You receive him at the airport road.”

I digested that one.

“Sir, at what time?” I was still not confident of myself.

“Oh, he will be coming sometime in the morning. Just receive him.” The Senior Pilot had lost interest in me. I was asking too many questions, like a sea/airport road lawyer.

Next day, after a leisurely breakfast of ‘Aloo Paranthas’ minus ‘Aloos’ in the Gomantak mess, I proceeded to the airport road on my Jawa.

My limited IQ and bloated ego prevented me from stopping cars on the airport road to inquire, if my new Squadron Commander happened to be driving one of them.

The failure of a young Sub Lieut. to receive his Squadron Commander made the headlines of the month in Hansa.

The creation of SDO, in the hoary past of the

naval aviation was a masterstroke.

Ostensibly, the SDO is responsible for co-ordination between the technical and the operational wings of the squadron. In reality he the most handy punching bag for whatever goes wrong.

The investigation of any normal accused begins with; “You have the right to remain silent....”

The trial of the SDO begins with, “You have been pronounced guilty. Now speak, for you do not have the right to remain silent.”

Believe me, forty years later, I still wake up from my nightmares in a cold sweat, dreading that the pilots have signed the form 700s, and I still haven’t managed to get the Seahawks on the line.

But then I smile and try to go back to sleep, telling myself that all that is a thing of the past.

But sleep eludes me.

Is it really a thing of the past?

The fact is that I am still SDO. I may be addressed as ‘darling’ or ‘e ji sunte ho’.

My trial begins with, “You have been pronounced guilty....”

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# Story of an Unscheduled Flight

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Commander GVK Unnithan (Retd)

“Dabolim, this is India Charlie 162. Good evening. Reporting 60 miles south of you. Overflying Dabolim, destination Bombay. Have 49 souls on board. For info, we have a dead body on board”.

The crackling of the loud speaker awoke Lt Pandey, the duty ATC Officer, from a pleasant *siesta*. The sound **dead body** fully alerted him.

“162 Dabolim, good evening. Confirm dead body in coffin as cargo or passenger turned dead body ?”

“Dabolim, 162, Passenger turned dead body in seat” was the answer.

“How did you confirm the death?” was the next question.

“We have a doctor on board- Dr Thomas from Military Hospital, Panjim. He attended the patient and confirmed the death”.

“Please confirm Lt Col Joseph Thomas, BDS, Dental Surgeon of MH Panjim” queried Pandey. As he was the only Dentist in the territory, he was well known and quite popular among the military fraternity.

“Dabolim, 162. Your last. Affirmative” was the reply after some time.

After some moments the Pilot re-confirmed the query- “ Dabolim, 162, your last. Affirmative”

“162, Dabolim, please confirm whether your airline accepts death confirmation certificate from a dentist? To the best of my knowledge, it is a physician’s job. How did you conclude that the death occurred? My services including medical officer could be made to stand by. You might as well avail them and save a life- just in

case..” The ATC Officer was humane to the core and he pleaded.

The Pilot was in double mind. No one, including God will forgive him if he had wasted an available chance. It is so near... the decision was his own and only his. A quick consultation and the Pilot decided to land. The ATC declared emergency and public announcements were made in the naval quarters to close up for night flying.

Oblivious of these happenings, two airline executives were taking a stroll on the nearby Bogmalo beach. They were on vacation, but wanted to get back to Bombay the same day. They tried to secure two seats to Bombay in the evening flight, two hours earlier and almost came to blows with the Airlines Station Manager. They were surprised but delighted to see one of their planes in a ‘regulation’ landing circuit and they ran to the Station to try their luck.

The ‘Passenger Turned Dead Body’ was a grand old gentleman from Cochin. He was ill and was accompanied by his Advocate-son; en route to Bombay for specialized and advanced treatment. The Advocate was sober, as if he had expected the death. He was consoled by other passengers and had taken the tragedy in the right spirit. He was confused- whether to take him back or else.. He wanted to contact the dear and near ones to arrive at a decision. On landing, the Doctor boarded the plane and confirmed the death. The Advocate was in a dilemma- to continue flight, either have the funeral at Bombay itself or embalm the body and take back to Cochin or worst come worst- a Goan funeral, provided he could identify his parish there.

Meanwhile the airport lounge was full of the



higher echelons of the Navy and Civilian administration. The Station Manager arrived, so did the Mamalatdar, Sanitary Inspector, Police, Public Health Dept, Municipal people and host of Navy brass. The Airline Executives pleaded with the Manager to allow them to fly as the dead body cannot be carried on the seat. The Advocate said that it was the duty of the airline to fly both of them to Bombay. It was the plane that killed his patient, if at all. The Station Manager discouraged Dr Thomas to alight there- lest he may have to oblige the executives- which he didn't want. The stalemate continued as day turned night and the night watch took over. Lt Pandey was also relieved and he didn't care much for what was happening in the airline enclosure and left the Station gleefully and unnoticed.

The suggestion of local funeral was agreed to. Provision of a suitable transport to distant Ponda was also agreed to by the Navy. Provost staff with a police personnel departed to Ponda as advance party and to tie up other things in

the night itself, if not early morning. The police received the body, documented and the PMO Hansa assisted the local authorities to conduct its post mortem. The local authorities issued a death certificate. Another Provost party left for bringing the Indian Oil staff for fueling. The main galley was restarted to provide tea/coffee and the like. Meanwhile the Lounge Canteen Contractor appeared from nowhere and opened his Canteen to do a brisk business. The flight departed with the airline executives much to the dislike of the Station Manager. The Doctor found a lift to Panjim. Finally, every one heaved a sigh of relief as the cortege left the Station with the Advocate –son and duty naval personnel late in the night.

The Station was finally closed down after a hectic day and a night which prolonged to the wee hours of the next day. In the whole Station, the only gentleman of consequence who had a long and sound sleep was none other than Lt Pandey!

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## Naval Aviation's Diamond Jubilee

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*Commodore Mukund Kunte (Retd.)*

At my somewhat advanced age of 80 plus years I decided to react to the Editor's call by combining two of the themes proposed by the QD 2014 team, I hope Shirley will not mind!

When I joined the Navy in 1951 in Cochin, I had my first thrill of being in a whaler under sail in the Ernakulam Channel. Just a little while later Indian Naval Aviation was to come into being and by the time I returned from the UK in early 1956 the Navy had got airborne and it was very thrilling to watch our Sealands taking off and landing in those narrow waters of the two channels.

My association with the fleet air arm goes back

to the aircraft carriers HMS Illustrious and HMS Indomitable (impressive names indeed, some others at the time being Indefatigable, Implacable & so on) when we were midshipmen in 1952-53. The former was acting as the trials carrier for the RN and in those times mirror landings (MADDLs – mirror assisted deck landings) under the DLCO (Deck Landing Control Officer) were in their nascent stage, the aircraft being piston engined Seafuries & Fireflies. Then came the 'angled deck' concept that was a British idea but first incorporated by the US Navy in their carrier USS Antitem, in which we 'mids' from the Indom were taken for



a day's exercises off Portsmouth.

When the Indomitable spent some time in the Mediterranean, Admiral Mountbatten was the C-in-C. An event to remember was when he came on board in Malta for a formal visit. After the ceremonial on the flight deck, as was his custom, he invited the ships company to break ranks and form a hollow square for his address. He began by telling us that as of that morning he had received his second hat, a NATO one – that of CINCAFMED (C-in-C Allied Forces Mediterranean). Then, with a flourish and sweep of his arm, he looked towards a tall building overlooking Valetta harbour and said, 'That's my new HQ'. That gesture must have been practiced and timed to perfection because immediately a whole lot of curtains were drawn and lights switched on!

Another memory from the Indomitable is of the Queen's Coronation Review in Spithead. Our Navy was represented by IN Ships Delhi, Ranjit and Tir and the RPN by HMPS Tippu Sultan but of course a major point of attraction was the Soviet cruiser Sverdolov. My association with naval aviation continued further because I became a Navigation and Direction specialist. I was able to utilize that connection in 2009 when we were in London. The Fleet Air Arm was observing their Centenary year so I wrote to the organizers of the 'FLY NAVY 100' in Yeovilton asking them if on the basis of my service in two aircraft carriers in 1952-53, as also being ND specialist and so aviator friendly, I would qualify to attend some functions, particularly the Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

And we got an invite:

***“Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm is commanded by the Commodore-in-Chief, His Royal Highness the Duke of York KG to invite Commodore and Mrs M.B.Kunte to a Garden Party on Thursday 9 July 2009***

***from 4 to 6 p.m.”***

Quite grand. The Party was an elegant affair as is to be expected. It was a privileged opportunity for the current and former serving members of the Royal Naval Air Service to celebrate a glorious naval heritage with members of the Royal Family. The size of the garden can be imagined because there were two Royal Marine Bands playing at either end of it. A surprise awaited me when we ran into old friends – Peter Dellar from Dartmouth Naval College days and Captain Keith Ridland and his wife Margaret who had spent three years in the British High Commission in Delhi. Also, a Captain John Pentreath turned out to be the son of David P who was a Queen's Telescope winner from a term senior and the Senior Midshipman of the Gun Room in the Indomitable. Out of the blue, we were greeted with a 'namaste' by a WRNS officer Lt Commander Fiona Shepherd, MBE (she had been to India for mountaineering). She was from the Staff of the First Sea Lord, on duty in her capacity as Equerry to the Princess Royal!

Indian naval aviation came of age quickly because our political masters saw merit in building a credible military force and INS Vikrant was acquired and steadily built upon. The high point was when history was made on 29 January 1985. A flight of four Sea Harriers led by Commander Arun Prakash flew in from Safdarjang airfield towards Vijay Chowk and after flying past the majestic domes of North and South Blocks they executed a magnificent hover and then, watched by two distinguished flyers Rajiv Gandhi and Admiral Tahiliani then respectively in the cockpits of the nation and navy, flew off at supersonic speed towards India Gate. So from this 'fish-head', hearty three Cheers to our fly-boys.

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## Vaghsheer - the Commissioning

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*Major General Subroto Kundu (Retd)*

It seems just the other day in Oct 1974, when the crew for commissioning the last Foxtrot was announced. Being a squadron MO of 9 SS based on Amba, it was a mighty proud moment for the sickbay staff and self to find myself as the commissioning MO of Vaghsheer.

On the evening of 9 Dec, we the officers and men embarked a chartered Boeing 727 under the command of Lt Cdr PS Bawa and flew into the night, north bound. The six air hostesses ensured that they took care of one and all, commencing with drinks followed by a sumptuous dinner. Post dinner, whilst most personnel went into a deep slumber, the YOs enjoyed the company of the young airhostesses. Early morning arrival at Moscow, hit one and all with a minus 20-degree temperature and a bone-chilling breeze.

At Riga, what with below freezing temperatures, heavy snowfalls and biting cold winds, we attempted to quickly settle down on board the PKZ-49, which was fortunately centrally heated. The cabins were small but comfortable. Being the Wine Secretary in addition, my cabin's cupboards were filled to capacity, in fact overflowing with the wardroom liquor and cigarettes, with little space left for my personal clothes and uniforms. And from that first evening itself, my cabin also became the unofficial bar and smoking den for the rest of our stay at Riga. In fact, even the personal champanski collection of the officers were stocked in whatever little space there was left, for the sole reason that I was a well and truly trusted Wine Secretary, in warmer climates. However, with temperatures at minus 20° C, the officer's champanski bottles did provide a little extra warmth for an over enthusiastic wine secretary, particularly if I had to wake up at 0200 hrs to go to the heads. And

when officers did note a rather than little fall in the levels of their respective champanski bottles, I had the pleasure of blaming another colleague or I would give an extra dash of rum. With my cabin filled to capacity with liquor and officers, in the evenings particularly, the Ruski officers of our submarine – the Kiev – also decided to use the space to join in the revelry and they were some large ones. All in all, everyone except me, felt that the arrangements were great. The two stewards even brought plates of peanuts and wafers to add to the overall satisfaction of one and all.

The days went by, handing-taking over equipment, drugs, spares with a lot of oohs and aahs at the quality and quantity, as also the deficiencies. Finally on 26 Dec 1974, the Kiev was recommissioned as Vaghsheer, in the presence of the Ambassador to the Soviet Union, the Naval Attaché, the ANA, C-in-C, Baltic Fleet and Flag Officer, Riga. The invocation was read out, followed by the naming ceremony and reading of the commissioning warrant. The Soviet flag was lowered and handed over to the CO and the Indian colors hoisted. It was a very proud moment for each one of the crew. Vaghsheer was ours. The last function of the day, was an evening at the Dom Offitsov which was more than just a pleasant one indeed.

Our hectic daily sailing schedules commenced thereafter, getting used to the machinery compartments, control spaces, assessing the very personality of our boat and getting used to the whims and fancies by her very movements. In between, we did have our moments at Riga town, tapping to a few steps to music, shopping and enjoying the company of the local girls. We were also given a guided tour of the Salspils concentration camp of World War 2 infancy.



Leaving Riga harbor for good arrived soon enough on 22 Feb 75. However, as I got ready to step on board, one final emergency of many such, stopped me. One of the Ruski carpenters was in severe abdominal pain and there was no other local doctor around. A burst stomach ulcer was diagnosed and the ambulance from the local MH arrived soon enough. The patient was immediately operated upon. By the time we cast off, the message arrived that the individual was now stable and out of danger.

Sailing out into the Baltic Sea on a severely cold blustery day soon turned into sunny days as we headed for the North Sea. The shipping lanes were extremely busy as we entered the English Channel. Fog replaced sunshine and foghorns blared continuously as ships wound their way up and down the channel. We finally arrived at Le Havre on 2nd March for a well-deserved R&R as also visits to Paris. One unfortunate incident as far as the long tailed shark Vaghsheer was concerned stands out. Entry into the Quai du Cameroun where we were berthed was through a system of locks. Whilst disengaging, engine orders issued, and sternway on, water under pressure was released at our stern, resulting in the forward submarine sonar dome, striking the jetty with such a force that the huge rubber tyres along the jetty flew into the air one after another. Whilst the dockside workers controlled the waterflow, the damage to the sonar dome had already been done. A blunder or sabotage, who knows? We continued, outward bound with a gaping hole in the sonar. We left harbor and headed further south towards our next port of call viz Dakar, Senegal. Vaghsheer's sonar dome was patched up here. The Terenga Hotel, was an extremely comfortable one where we were put up from the 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March 75. Next port of call, Takoradi, Ghana. It was here that our cold room and cool rooms packed up. With Freon gas of the quantity required by the sub unavailable at

Takoradi and Accra, we had to perforce set sail for Pt Louis, Mauritius with the cold and cool rooms no longer available for storage of fresh foods. The passage around the Cape of Good Hope was a 21-day one. Whatever little fresh rations available diminished rapidly as it grew warmer crossing the Equator. We were forced to remain on surface except for a couple of check dives. A search of the foreends for dry rations that were embarked before we left Riga revealed only sacks of suji. We were to have on board, in addition to the above, at least, 10 sacks of rice and another 10 sacks of flour. However, what we had actually on board were 30 sacks of suji. While everyone scratched their respective heads, there was little anyone could do, now that we were heading for the Cape of Good Hope. Much later, what really happened was this. One of our merchant vessels had arrived at Odessa with 3 containers, each containing bags of rice, suji and flour separately. While unloading these containers, the contents were to be equally distributed between three vessels being commissioned at the same time in three different ports viz Riga, Vladivostok and Odessa.

However, some bright spark decided on the safest and easiest method of distribution without too much of sweat. And so, one container only containing suji arrived at Riga, one container each arrived separately at Vladivostok and one was left at Odessa for the ship being fitted out there.

While, it normally would not have made such a difference with the cold and cool rooms functioning (the other two vessels had no such emergency), Vaghsheer lost all Freon gas at Ghana, with no replacement and a long 21-day passage to Mauritius. The cooks did their best with the suji on board i.e. we had uppma for breakfast, uppma for lunch, uppma for dinner and uppma for small eats in different forms and that too for 21 days.

We rounded the Cape of Good Hope escorted



by South African war vessels with the Table Mountain looming, in the distance, topped with clouds. It was once again bitterly cold. We passed Madagascar and on the 75<sup>th</sup> day of our passage from Riga we anchored off Pt Louis for a well deserved hosing down of the 100 bodies on board as also the casing with fresh water. Early next morning we tied up alongside. Pt Louis was a refreshing change and the large Indian community took care of us for 5 days with sight- seeing, swimming and just lolling around on the pretty beaches. We all completed our duty free shopping and finally set sail, with home revs on. We arrived at Janjira, off Bombay, a day earlier and anchored. Touching up of the submarine was carried out. At about 1200 hrs a signal was received by the boat, which read as follows," Personal for Surg Lt Kundu. Midget

launched without periscope 8 May." My daughter, Monika had been born. Well, after all the heartiest congratulations were over, we did get down to basics in the wardroom i.e. we emptied out whatever beer we carried on board.

Vaghsheer, finally arrived at her home port, Bombay, to loud martial music and cheers from our respective families and the 9<sup>th</sup> Submarine Squadron. She tied up alongside Amba.

Reunited with families, it was good to be back home after a long haul. However, we all went off upma for a long long while.

The CO reported the safe arrival of the last addition to the squadron. The signal reply so received read, "Thank God".

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## Joy and Pride of Commissioning A Ship/Shore Establishment

*Rear Admiral JMS Sodhi (Retd)*

Naval personnel will always have fond memories of their contribution to the Nation and the Navy on the solemn occasion of commissioning of any new ship or shore establishment and during my short career I was very fortunate to be part of the commissioning crews of submarines Kalvari, Kursura and Vela and the Submarine Base Virbahu besides also having to preside over the decommissioning of the submarine INS Vela.

Commissioning of India's first submarine INS Kalvari on 08 December 1967 at Riga in the erstwhile Soviet Union was indeed a very historic occasion as the foundation of the Indian Navy's most potent arm was being laid. The first batch of submarine crew comprising 18 officers and several sailors had left Mumbai for Vladivostok on 22 June 1966 and after very

rigorous training in very difficult but friendly environment, we were ready to commission the submarine at Riga under the command of Commander K S Subramanian. I was the ship Torpedo Officer (Commander BCH 3) and we were all privileged to commission the submarine in sub zero temperatures of minus 20 degrees Celsius with our meagre cold weather clothing. After the commissioning ceremony and other events connected with the commissioning rituals were over, we all got down to the task of harbor and sea work up and these were very professionally executed and completed in adverse weather conditions.

Thereafter, I was the Executive Officer of the fourth Indian Naval submarine Kursura, which was also commissioned at Riga on 18 December 1969. The experience of



commissioning and work up of Kalvari helped us tremendously and we went through the paces quickly and with more confidence. Our poor experience with INS Talwar escorting Kalvari from Riga to India had ensured that we would sail alone and this benefitted us as we were able to stay in hotels during our passage from Riga to Visakhapatnam and this R&R was most welcome. Kursura under the command of Cdr Arun Auditto was high on professionalism and set exacting standards of drills and procedures that are even today being mostly followed by all submarines. The most severe challenge we faced was when two of our crew members (one officer and one sailor) were diagnosed with chicken pox and we were directed to off load them at Port Moresby in South Africa which was still practicing apartheid and we were afraid that they would be quarantined and treated separately specially since the officers complexion was far darker than the sailors. Fortunately, they were both treated in hospital reserved for whites only.

In 1971, the Bangladesh crisis was looming large and the first submarine Base was commissioned as INS Virbahu at Visakapatnam and I was the first training co-ordinator to ensure that in future all the submarine training would be done in India and we would not require any more submarine crews to be sent to USSR. This also helped in the smooth transfer of training experience and curriculum to Satavahana when it was commissioned later.

In May 1973 when I was still in command of Kursura I was selected as CO designate of the first of the new Vela class submarines and was sent to Murmansk for the deep diving trials. During my visit to Moscow I was able to firm up the arrival of Vela crew at Riga on 18 August 1973 and to commission the submarine on 31 August 1973. The date for the return passage

was also fixed much in advance. The Soviets forwarded these dates to NHQ who readily agreed to the schedule. The work up and training went very smoothly and the attitude of the Soviets was completely different now that we were experienced submariners and no longer dependent on them. The return passage was also very exciting and whilst rounding the Cape of Good Hope we experienced very rough seas when the waves came from behind and went over the submarine. Near Mauritius, we again encountered very rough seas and with NHQ approval we dived for 3 days and overcame the cyclonic weather. Vela was the first submarine to be based at Mumbai and the Western Naval Command went out of its way to ensure that all our logistic requirements were fully met. During tactical exercises Vela remained undetected on nearly all occasions that prompted Admiral Dawson to send me a signal, "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa"

In June 2010, I was invited by C-in-C, East to preside over the decommissioning ceremony of Vela which had completed nearly 37 years of active service in the Navy and had trained hundreds of submariners in the art of submarine operations and warfare. Vela remains a legend in the Submarine Arm for the operational successes it had achieved including the coveted Unit Citation in 2004-05. It was indeed a very solemn occasion to witness the decommissioning of one of the finest boats of the Navy, which had contributed substantially to the operational capability of the Indian Navy and to the security of the country.

Finally, in 1976 I was in command of Kalvari when she was re-commissioned at Vladivostok after her major refit in USSR and this also paved the way for major refits being undertaken at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam.

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# A Ship Named After India's Holiest River

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*Commodore RPS Ravi (Retd)*

Bimal Roy's 1961 movie '*Kabuliwala*' had its story adapted from a story by the same name by Nobel Laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore. The movie was directed by Hemen Gupta who had been private secretary to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The movie had a famous number sung by Hemant Kumar: *Ganga aaye kahan se, Ganga jaaye kahan re*. Families of the commissioning crew of the second of the Godavari class (modified Leander class) ships, named after India's holiest river, INS Ganga, must have sung the opening lines of this song many times during the one and a half years after commissioning that I remained on board as Signal Communication Officer.

Ganga was in a hurry everywhere, even to be commissioned. Normally, ships of a class follow their pennant numbers sequentially from the first one of the class. But, Ganga would have none of it. After F20, Godavari, it suddenly overshot F21, Gomati and got commissioned as F22 on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1985.

Visiting a ship before commissioning fills you with strange feelings. We used to visit her regularly at Mazagon Docks. A ship being commissioned is not unlike a baby being born; gradually it takes shape in its mother's womb, the yard, and then slowly starts kicking around. For me it was a prolonged association with the Godavari class since I was a part of her Trials Team at WATT (B) (Weapon Acceptance and Trials Team, Bombay) and undertook the trials of communication and electronic warfare compartments, and harbour and sea trials of the equipment. The CO designate, Captain K K Kohli, wanted the ASW Officer MS Shekhawat and I to continue in WATT (B) as long as possible and we undertook most of our own trials and ensured we got the best. We

even put through some much needed modifications.

But the comparison to a new born baby ceases a few days before commissioning. It now becomes like the rehearsal of a play. I have directed and acted in a few and hence I am aware that on the night before the final staging, you can't believe you have finally got the act together. Similarly, in our case, we were to be commissioned by the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi on the 30<sup>th</sup> Dec 1985. On the night of 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> Dec, we couldn't believe Ganga would finally be commissioned the next day. There were cables lying around, last minute painting to be done, woodwork wasn't yet over and there was dust, confusion and men in overalls, everywhere.

However, came the dawn of 30<sup>th</sup> and everything was suddenly ship-shape: the brass gleamed, the floors were waxed and shining, and there was sudden freshness and neatness around. On the morning of 30<sup>th</sup>, as I reached on board in ceremonial rig, I felt that the ship was, in this respect too, exactly like the holy river Ganga: it remains holy and sacred, hiding in its depth all that's thrown in it.

This was the second ship after Godavari whose commissioning I watched at close quarters. For men in uniform, commissioning signifies the transformation of the ship from mere skeleton and flesh put together by the Yard to having its heart and soul put into it by the men who are going to have it as a second home, sail on her and take her the harm's way.

This distinction is as curious as it is fascinating. The men who build the ship work under challenging conditions. One slip by them in, say,



welding, can result into serious incidents and fatalities. They too have a sense of belongingness with the ship over (in our case) years of pre-commissioning period; a period when there is no power, no air-conditioning, no water, no order and nothing good to look at. And yet, as soon as the ship is commissioned, we tend to forget them and reason it out with ourselves that the ship didn't belong to those "uncouth", "grimy", "*paan-chewing*" and "*bidi-smoking*" workers and supervisors.

Returning to Ganga's commissioning, after the commissioning warrant was read out by the Captain and the ship's commissioning pendant, national flag and naval ensign broke out, we stepped on board and felt that now she was she, a living being, pulsating with the power of machinery and weapons. The Indian designers had done wonders; she was the second ship of her tonnage (3600 tons of standard displacement), to carry two large Seaking 42B Helicopters on board that gave her tremendous advantage in ASW and anti-ship warfare. The ship was fitted with the latest and wholly indigenous Composite Communication System (CCS), a feather in the cap of Bharat Electronics and indigenous APSOH Sonar. It was the first ship in the Indian Navy to have Selenia IPN 10 Combat Data System as also INMARSAT. Together with its weapons of four P22 anti-ship missile launchers, one OSA-M SAM launcher, two 57mm anti-ship, anti-shore twin guns, two ILAS3 triple launchers for A244S ASW torpedoes, and four AK230 AA guns, it carried a deadly punch. We felt proud to step on board.

As the Captain escorted the Prime Minister for a walk around the ship, we were closed up on the equipment in our compartments. I was on INS 3, the latest Electronic Warfare system from Selenia, Italy. My heart-beats were increasing as Shri Rajiv Gandhi approached the EW

Compartment on the back of the Ops Room. I briefly explained the equipment to him and even after nearly three decades, I still remember the question he asked me, "Can it detect and jam frequency-agile radars?" All of us were used to the perception of our political leaders not knowing anything much about matters of defense. But, here, we had a PM, who asked a most relevant question about a complex electronic system. After the morning commissioning ceremony my chest was already bursting with pride. After hearing his question, it literally ballooned.

After the PM and VIPs and other visitors left, finally we had the ship to ourselves. The Commanding Officer brought his old mother on board and took a picture with her; there was a combined picture of the commissioning crew. By evening when we had the commissioning cocktails on board, we already had the sense of ownership.

The Prime Minister's association with the ship didn't end there. One year later, we took him and Smt Sonia Gandhi for their visit to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. They also visited and interacted with the officers in the wardroom and the sailors on the quarterdeck. Ganga's helo-deck accomplished a record number of helicopter sorties during their visit.

I still remember, the first sortie by Seaking that the PM and Smt. Sonia Gandhi took. She was at his arm all the time as a shy wife. Before going in, one of the crew gave them the Mae Wests to wear. Shri Rajiv Gandhi dutifully donned his but Smt Sonia Gandhi declined, came closer to him and said, "He is my life-saver; I shall cling to him."

Now, many years later, when lots of water has flown in its namesake, the holiest of the rivers, Ganga; operations and exercises that she has



participated in, foreign shores that she has touched, I still remember the first time we sailed on her, when she was still not commissioned. In the afternoon, when I came down for lunch (to be had from a cardboard box), there were frantic announcements for me to come up on the bridge. When I finally ran up, panting, the CO asked me how much time it would take me to learn Greek. I told him that my brother was learning Latin and got a smattering of it in about two months. Greek, I told him would be even tougher and may take at least three months. "Ah" he told me, "You mean to say that it would

take us three months time to understand the signal our Signal Yeoman has received from Rajput on the Signaling Light."

I marveled at the fast one that he had pulled on me. But, we also knew the task at hand. We toiled and sweated in the next few months to make hers one of the finest ship's companies in the Fleet. The ship named after India's holiest rivers soon became one of the best in the Fleet and we felt proud to be so named on commissioning.

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## Joys of Commissioning INS Nilgiri and Pangs of Decommissioning INS Delhi

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*Commander Rajnish (Retd)*

I have had the privilege of being the first Navigating Officer of INS Nilgiri, the first major warship built in Mazagon Docks Ltd., Mumbai and the last Commander and Commanding Officer of INS Delhi. Both the ships have significant places in the history of Indian Navy.

Writing about INS Nilgiri first, I joined the commissioning crew of the ship in January 1972. She was berthed in Mazagon Docks and undergoing the last stages of HATS, SATS and fitting out. Proceeding to sea with teams from MAZDOCKS embarked, for trials and returning to harbour at the end of the day was an unforgettable experience. Setting to work the operations room, various RADARs, equipping the chart room with the requisite chart folios, navigation publications, and instruments, swinging the compass for the first time added a lot of interest and I felt proud to be the first Navigating Officer of the ship. The ship sailed for trials under a red ensign till the date of her

commissioning into the Indian Navy.

How the whole project of building a frigate in India materialized, is very vividly described by Rear Admiral CL Bhandari (Retired) in his article 'BIRTH OF A FRIGATE' published in Quarterdeck 1994. He had been closely connected with the Leander Project in its early stages. He had, in his article, mentioned that a separate alongside berth with a traveling crane had to be created in MAZDOCKS. This became possible with Bombay Port Trust agreeing to give land on a 99 years lease adjoining Kasara Basin. A separate directorate was established at Naval Headquarters to monitor the progress of frigate building. A dedicated shop was set up in Naval Dockyard, Bombay for fabrication of boilers. An office named Indian Frigate Provisioning Office (IFPO) was set up in Vickers Yard at New Castle (UK). It was there to see how much effort was required for INS Nilgiri to be built.



The big day, June 3, 1972, the day of commissioning of INS Nilgiri finally arrived. The ship was berthed at Cruiser Wharf, Naval Dockyard, Bombay for the occasion. The whole area had been spruced up. Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India at that time commissioned the ship. Ship's Officers were introduced to her by Captain DS Paintal. Admiral SM Nanda, Chief of the Naval Staff was also present. I managed to obtain an autograph from Shrimati Indira Gandhi, when she had come to Nilgiri's operations room during her walk around the ship immediately after commissioning.



Post commissioning, INS Nilgiri sailed to Port Blair, Singapore, Djakarta and Bali for flag showing. During her week's stay in Singapore the ship carried out missile firing (Indian Navy's first one) practice at a PTA in South China Sea. The first missile, on order to 'fire' from the Captain through Gunnery Officer Lieutenant Commander Madhvendra Singh, seemed to refuse to leave the launching pad which had turned red hot. Captain had ordered Damage Control State One. Just then the missile shot off and hit the target. Virtually the whole ship's company on the upper deck gave a resounding applause. Crossing the line ceremony was held while crossing the equator in the sea between Singapore and Djakarta.

Being a member of the commissioning team

of INS Nilgiri has left an indelible mark in my memory lane.

Several years down the passage of time, I was appointed as Commander INS Delhi in December 1976.

Thereafter INS Delhi carried out the role of Midshipmen's Harbour Training Ship for which purpose she remained moored at the cruiser trots in Ernakulam Channel, Cochin for more than six months. By then, orders for her decommissioning had been received. De-storing commenced while at Cochin itself. Final decommissioning was to take place at Bombay. For this purpose, the Command had almost decided to have her towed from Cochin to Bombay. But the highly motivated engineers with Lieutenant Commander Chetal as the Engineer Officer took it upon their shoulders to make her seaworthy for her final voyage. She sailed out of Cochin Harbour one fine morning of December 1977 under own power. Vice Admiral Barboza, Flag Officer Commanding, Southern Naval Area embarked the ship in harbour, flew his flag on her and sailed out to off Fairway Buoy. On reaching the open sea, the quarterdeck was made ready for a helicopter landing and FOC SOUTH disembarked in a helicopter. Enroute to Bombay, off Goa, naval aircraft from INS Hansa, Dabolim accorded a spectacular last salute to the ship by making several fly pasts. INS Delhi was ceremoniously received off Bombay Floating Light by ships of the Western Fleet. The Fleet Commander Vice Admiral MP Awati ordered that he be transferred from his ship, one of the new GIRI Class, to INS DELHI in the ship's whaler pulled by Midshipmen. The order was complied with; the Fleet Commander came on board and transferred his flag too to INS Delhi for the rest of the day. The ship berthed at Break Water Extension for the rest of de-storing.



That is when the pangs of decommissioning truly began to be felt. The life rafts were the first to be removed, then the boats. One morning in February, her bower anchors along with chain cables were taken away leaving two gaping holes of the hose pipes looking like eyes gorged out. Other Naval Stores, spare gears, medical equipment, chart folios and a whole range of other equipment that had lived with her during her operational life started leaving her. Her radars that had scanned the oceans, her guns that had thundered her challenge over hostile seas, all of them were taken away. One of her six-inch turrets was gifted to New Zealand for ACHILLES Association, on their request.

The ship, as HMS ACHILLES, had served in Royal New Zealand Navy during Second World War. Most of the ship's crew at that time was New Zealanders.

Members of the ship's company too began to be transferred out; a stage came when only a handful of personnel remained. Flow of air began to be heard, with eerie sound, in her passages and corridors. One evening the fire in the officers' galley was ceremoniously turned off forever.

INS Delhi was berthed on Cruiser Wharf for her decommissioning on 30th June 1978. The special decommissioning ceremony was performed in the presence of Vice Admiral RKS Gandhi, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command and other senior naval officers. Weather was threatening to pack up. The First Lieutenant repeatedly sought instructions from me whether the quarterdeck awnings were to be kept rigged. For full splendor of the Sunset Ceremony, it was necessary that the awnings and stanchions be struck. I decided to speak to the Command Met Officer about his assessment of the weather. He said, "Sir, there are 50% chances of rain". That didn't sound very encouraging. Depending heavily on the Delhi's name as the 'Lucky Ship', I ordered the awnings to be struck. Quarterdeck was got ready at full speed. Ceremonial Guard and Band and ship's company mustered.

Commanding Officers of ships in harbor, senior officers and finally the C-in-C arrived at the appointed time and took up their positions. Press reporters were also present in great strength to cover the event. In the mean time dark rain clouds started in the sky above the Naval Dockyard; cool breeze indicated impending rain. At 'five minutes to sunset, thunder became louder. As the buglers sounded the last post, a very fine drizzle started and continued that way till I handed over the folded ensign to the C-in-C. It seemed that the heavens too wanted to participate in bidding farewell to 'Grand Old Lady' of the Indian Navy. As the parade dispersed and dignitaries left the ship, it rained heavily, as if the Gods wept. This episode was reported in the papers the next day. With this event the 'Grand Old Lady' passed into annals of History of Indian Navy.

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## Pangs of Decommissioning – IN LCU L-34

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*Commander T Rajasekhar*

Twenty Seventh day of April 2010, remains embedded in my memory as I was elated seeing the letter appointing me as the Commanding Officer of IN LCU L-34 based at Port Blair. It was only later on close scrutiny of the letter and interaction with seniors and colleagues, realization had dawned upon me, that I may be the last captain of the ship that had rendered 31 years of glorious service to the Indian Navy.

I was fortunate to have been given the responsibility to command a warship with unique capabilities of carrying out amphibious operations in addition to surface operations and even more fortunate to be in the lineage of successful and competent commanding officers who have handled and maintained her over the years.

My immediate predecessors had laboriously completed the proceedings for the decommissioning of the ship whilst the decision of the firm date of decommissioning was being finalised by higher echelons of the navy.

The ship was commissioned on 28 January 1980 and was the first of the LCU Mk II Series to be built at the Goa Shipyard Ltd. During her 31 years of glorious service in the Indian Navy, she participated in many fleet and flotilla amphibious exercises and carried out successful beachings at most of the major and minor landing sites located in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. She had many 'Firsts' amongst the LCUs with relation to operations in and around Andaman and Nicobar Islands. She also had actively participated in operations of national importance such as the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement 'OP Madad' for refugee transfer from Rameshwaram to Talaimannar, Sri Lanka and was deployed in relief operations

post tsunami for transportation of relief material to remote islands in the A&N Islands to help the administration in disaster relief.

With such credentials behind her, we continued to meet all requirements that were ordered, in spite of its limitation due to ageing machinery and equipment. IN LCU L-34 bid au revoir to the pristine waters of the emerald islands on 24 Oct 11 when she entered Port Blair harbour after her last deployment to the Northern Group of Islands.

The formal orders for decommissioning of L-34 along with L-32 were received at the Headquarters, Andaman & Nicobar Command. The task of decommissioning a LCU class of ship in Port Blair is a mammoth task, considering the fact that this would be the first decommissioning of an Indian Naval Ship at Port Blair.

At the first hint of an impending decommissioning, the officers and crew were being transferred to units where their need/requirement was felt. I along with my depleted team of one officer and remaining men set about to undertake the tasks that were required for decommissioning. We were to see that all the stores and spares which were in the custody of the ship for last 31 years were sighted, accounted and returned to NSD (PB). The small arms and ammunition were to be either re-appropriated to naval units in Port Blair or returned to NAD (V).

All major issuing authorities like, INDA (MB), NCD (V), MS (V) & NAD (V) were located across the Bay of Bengal at a distance of approximately 750 NM. The distance involved in transferring material proved to be a logistic challenge. Some additional challenges were to obtain a detailed



list of activities that were to be undertaken for decommissioning in Port Blair and the procurement of decommissioning pennant to name a few. These challenges were surmounted in Feb 11 upon visiting a decommissioned submarine in Visakhapatnam.

We were also involved in ensuring that all events and activities connected were meticulously planned and executed. Each passing day saw equipment and stores being removed and taken for survey to NSD (PB). Men onboard toiled in ensuring a safe ship at all times. This involved extensive underwater package with closing of underwater openings and de-energising electrical connections in the ship.

As we reached closer to the date our hearts grew heavier with grief and sorrow at the thought of being separated from 'our' ship. The first event of the decommissioning ceremony was on 24 Apr 11 when the paying off pennant (also referred to as the decommissioning pennant) was hoisted. As per tradition, the paying off pennant is hoisted on the Sunday preceding the actual date of decommissioning. The length of the decommissioning pennant was 176 feet equalling the length of the ship.

The get-together of the ship's company over Rum punch in the ensuing week displayed emotions of various hues from the crew indicating their inner feelings.

On 28 Apr 11, a day prior to the decommissioning, a combined barakhana was organised by both the decommissioning ships namely L-32 and L-34. Cmde BCS Sethi, the Naval Officer –in-Charge A & N, Commanding, Officers of Utkrosh, Jarawa and ships of the Andaman and Nicobar Flotilla (ANFLOT), Staff from NOIC A & N were invited along with sailors from the ANFLOT. Cdr Sandeep Singh Sarna and Cdr Rahul Sinha, ex- COs of L-34 and Cdr Ajay Yadav, ex-CO of L-32 were the special

invitees for the decommissioning ceremony. The Naval Officer-in-Charge, A&N interacted with ex-COs, officers and men of the ships over the barakhana.

In the evening, the same day, a cocktail party was organised at the Andaman and Nicobar Command Officers' Mess. The occasion was graced by the presence of Maj Gen NP Padhi, Chief of Staff, Andaman and Nicobar Command. The chief guest interacted with ex-COs of L-34 and L-32 and other officers. The gathering was a conglomeration of officers from three services with adequate interest being shown towards the activities undertaken by both the ships in their prime years.

The decommissioning ceremony took place on the 29 Apr 11. The Chief Guest, Maj Gen NP Padhi, COS, ANC was received by Cmde BCS Sethi, NOIC, A&N. In the background were the ships berthed on the jetty right opposite the NOIC A & N office flying the national flag & naval ensign for the last time. The ship's company of both the ships were mustered in Dress No 2 opposite the ships. The Chief Guest met ex-COs, officers and men of both the ships. At 1732 hrs after a short speech by the NOIC, A&N highlighting the achievements of the ships and the importance of the decommissioning ceremony, the Sunset Ceremony took place wherein the naval ensign and the jack were hauled down for the last time.





The ensign was folded and then put in a box that was later presented to the Chief Guest. The Guard then 'reversed arms' and the 'Last Post' was sounded by the bugler. The paying off pennant was then struck down on completion of the Last Post.

The decommissioning ceremony came to an end when a formal report was made to the Chief Guest by me and Cdr Manu, CO L-32 respectively:

"LCU 34 and 32 Decommissioned, Sir"

The joy of handing over a ship to a successor is always a joyous occasion as it gives the 'Captain' an inner satisfaction of having led men in the profession of arms that is both dynamic and demanding. However, in this case of decommissioning, the joy of relinquishing the command is a feeling of happiness mixed with sorrow, with a hope that a ship with similar name would be christened in the near future which would serve for a longer innings in the Indian Navy.

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## Commissioning of the third Petya

*Commodore Mukund Kunte (Retd)*

And now, on to the Commissioning of KILTAN – the third 'Pelka' ( Protivo Lodachnii Karable or anti-submarine ship) on 30th October 1969. The Ambassador, Mr D.P. Dhar was indisposed so the Minister in the Embassy, Mr Ramesh Bhandari did the honours. Mrs Meena Dhir cut the ribbon and the ship turned out to be lucky.

We had a happy commission because the crew pulled together during 10 months of training on Ruski Island and thereafter onboard a fine ship armed to the grill – torpedoes, 76.5 mm guns, A/S rockets, depth charges and ship propulsion on gas turbines of over 30 knots besides 'povorots' or 'active rudders' enabling one to 'waltz' to the jetty and do 'a fox-trot' when casting off! Just 365 + 40 days of Command and I handed over to my successor, then Commander Gopal Rao, who took the Kiltan for the attack on Karachi on 4 December 1971 and won a MVC. A small aside will not be out of place. The NHQ sailing signal had ordered the ship to sail from Vladivostok for Hongkong on 21 Nov 69 by the most direct route. That

meant passing through the Formosa (since changed to Taiwan) Straits, inviting possible Chinese protests. So a clarification was sought and we were told to go round Formosa Island.

We were in Bombay in time for the President's Fleet Review by Shri V.V. Giri. A day earlier Admiral Chaterjee came on board as was customary for Naval Chiefs to visit newly commissioned ships and he brought along Mrs Phulrenu Guha, MOS in the Min of Finance. She enquired why it was necessary for the ship to be air-conditioned. Then, during a walk round we took her to a compartment full of electronic machinery and she looked satisfied, noting in the Visitor's Book, "Very good to be onboard".

**Post Script:** Admiral Nadkarni, when he was the Chief and I was serving in the Research & Analysis Wing of the Cabinet Secretariat, told me how the Kiltan was used as target for a missile firing practice and that she sank 'beautifully'!

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# Commissioning INS Amba

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*Commodore Subrata Bose (Retd)*

INS Amba was the one and only Submarine Tender ship of the Indian Navy. It was a Ugra class ship, modified to Indian Navy requirements and was acquired from the USSR over 43 years ago. The ship had a displacement of 6750 tons, length 141m (462ft), beam 17.6m (60ft), and draught 7m (23ft). It had twin shafts, and was propelled by diesel electric engines with a maximum speed of 17 kts. The ship had an armament of two 76 mm turret guns, forward and aft. There was also a helo deck.

It was commissioned at Odessa on 28 December 1968. I was fortunate and privileged to be one of the officers of the commissioning crew as the Torpedo & Antisubmarine Officer (TASO) and the Diving Supervisory Officer. At the time of commissioning the crew consisted of 18 officers and about 250 sailors, with Capt MR Schunker in command. There were no Topasses in the complement of the crew, and from the Captain downwards, each one of us cleaned our own heads and showers until we returned to India.

After a 3 months crash course in written and spoken Russian from March to June 1968, we assembled in Bombay by mid-December 1968 to proceed to Odessa for commissioning on 27 Dec 1968. On arrival at Bombay, we were informed that the ships company would proceed in two batches by chartered Air India flights to the USSR. A period of hectic activities followed; kitting up for the Russian winter, procuring and packing victualling, clothing, canteen, medical stores for six months.

From the date of my departure from Bombay until the ship's arrival in India, I had kept a diary of events. Excerpts from my diary of some of the memorable events are given below.

## **19 Dec 68**

Left Bombay for Moscow at 0700 hrs by a chartered Air India flight. We are the second batch of seven officers and about 125 sailors with a large amount of personal baggage and ship's stores. The Commanding Officer, and 10 officers and about 125 sailors had left on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1968. After an hour's fuelling stop at New Delhi, we arrived at Sheremetyevo International Airport Moscow at 1700 hrs IST (1430hrs Moscow Time). On landing we found the tarmac covered in snow with the temperature at -5°C. We were received at the airport by a Petty Officer Writer from the Indian Embassy who helped us in quickly completing immigration and customs formalities. After a wait of over four hours, we were taken to Vnukovo airport 45 kilometres away to board the flight to Odessa. During this drive we saw Moscow by night and had a glimpse of the majestic Kremlin with its onion shaped domes.

## **20-26 Dec 1968**

After a 2½ hr flight we landed at Odessa at 0030 hrs. It took another hour to unload the personal baggage and ship's stores from the aircraft and load them again in the trucks since we had to do it ourselves. We finally arrived at the Watermelon Jetty in Odessa dockyard around 0230 hrs and through a cold drizzle had our first glimpse of the ship we were to commission. The Captain, the Commander (Cdr CM Vyas) and the 1<sup>st</sup> Lt (Lt Cdr SW Lakhkar) were on the deck to meet us. Unloading our baggage from the truck to the ship took another hour, and after locating my cabin, I went to sleep almost 27 hrs since I had got up the previous morning in Bombay.



Later in the morning I found that the ship had a parallel crew of Russian officers and sailors along with 5 English language interpreters. This crew was to be with us for handing over the ship, train us on the various equipment, weapons and machinery as also prove them during the sea trials. We followed the Russian routine of hands call at 0530hrs and pipe down at 2300 hrs, with breaks for breakfast, lunch and dinner. After getting acquainted with our Russian counterparts (I had three – the ASWO, the Diving Officer and the Torpedo Officer), for the next six days all hands got down to taking over and getting acquainted with their departments. The Diving department had 12 compartments including a 8-man Recompression Chamber (RCC). In addition, as the CBO, I had to take over the Russian CBs which were mostly marked Secret and kept in folios of two or three books. There were almost a hundred such folios pertaining to each and every aspect of the ship and it took me one whole day to take over the CBs.

On the evening of 26 Dec 1968, we were informed that the commissioning had been postponed to another date since the Indian dignitaries could not arrive from Moscow because Odessa airport was closed due to bad weather.

## **27 Dec1968**

In the afternoon we came to know that the Indian dignitaries Mr. Than, the Charge d' affairs and his wife, and Capt S. Prakash, the Indian Naval Attache, had arrived in Odessa and it was decided to commission Amba on 28 Dec 1968.

In the evening, all officers and the Indian dignitaries attended a formal dinner hosted by Vice Admiral Mizin, Chief of Staff of the Red Banner Black Sea Fleet at the Officers' Club.

The dinner started at 2200 hrs. It was an eight-course dinner with five different types of drinks and six different types of caviar. Innumerable toasts were drunk, speeches were made with every toast, and the dinner was finally over at 0100hrs the next morning.

## **28 Dec1968. Commissioning Day**

The day dawned clear but cold with a force 4 wind on deck. The deck was covered with snow of the previous night and the temperature was around -3°C. However, everybody was cheerful and morale was very high. Commissioning this ship made one feel like a pioneer. At 1030 hrs all hands, fell in on the quarterdeck. The Indian guard of honour, commanded by the Gunnery Officer, Lt RK Khanna, and a Russian Naval Band were positioned on the pontoon alongside. The sky had now become cloudy with a bitterly cold wind blowing, cutting through our blue No.1 dress.

**1100 hrs.** The Indian Charge d' affairs, Mr. Than and Vice Admiral Mizin, arrived and inspected the guards of honour together. Vice Admiral Mizin made a short address to which Mr. Than replied. Thereafter, the Russian Captain Vishevsnisky and Capt MR Schunker signed the documents of handing over and taking over. The Russian Flags were then hauled down and the First Lt, Lt Cdr SW Lakhkar read an invocation in Sanskrit and Mrs. Than named the ship AMBA. Next, Captain MR Schunker read the Commissioning Warrant and on completion, ordered the Indian colours to be hoisted. The Indian guard of honour presented arms and the Russian Band played the Indian national anthem as the Indian Naval ensign and the national flag were hoisted. As the Indian naval ensign fluttered free, the sun broke through. The Gods were indeed smiling upon INS AMBA. After the Commissioning ceremony ended, the



Indian and Russian officers and dignitaries repaired to the wardroom for a champagne and caviar party and lunch, while the Indian and Russian sailors proceeded to their messes for a traditional Indian barakhana.

## 29 Dec 1968 – 16 Mar 1969

This was a period of harbour training and sea trials. Training was considerably hampered as the Russian interpreters were unable to translate the Russian technical terms into English. We solved the problem by reading up the relevant manuals and thereby trained ourselves. During sea trials we found innumerable defects in equipment and machinery. When informed, the Russian crew would not accept them as such. However, from the Captain downwards, we stuck to our guns and forced them to rectify the defects. It was a matter of professional and national pride and we made the Russians realize that we were not to be taken lightly. All of us worked long hours, on deck and indoors, sometimes in temperatures below -10°C with a snow blizzard blowing. Once, whilst anchored in Odessa anchorage, the sea froze and we found the ship dragging even with both anchors down. For

seven hours, the engines had to be constantly run at 11 knots ahead to maintain the anchored position.

A few words about our ship's company. They were a magnificent bunch of men, from the senior-most to the junior-most, in each and every department. Considering the size of the ship, we were a bit short-handed. This was overcome as each one of them pulled his weight. They were always cheerful, even under the adverse sea and weather conditions that we experienced. There was not one defaulter at the Captain's Table throughout our stay in the USSR!!

It was however not all work. All of us went ashore after working hours, weather permitting and when not on duty. As a city Odessa had plenty to offer to suit every taste. I managed to see the opera "Rigoletto" and the ballets "Spartacus" and "Swan Lake" at the Odessa Opera and Ballet Theatre, considered to be the second best in Europe after the one in Vienna.

On the forenoon of 17 Mar 1968, we left Odessa and were homeward bound. We were seen off by the Indian Ambassador Mr. Dhar and Capt. S Prakash, the Indian Naval Attache.

## The Commissioning Officers

Captain MR Schunker

Cdr CM Vyas (Commander)

Cdr S Murthy (Cdr L)

LCdr SW Lakhkar,

LCdr CW Charles (DLO)

LCdr LS Negi (NO),

Lt S Mohan (ALO)

LCdr. S. Bose (TASO & Ship's Diving Officer),

Lt.N S Achreja (SCO)

Surg Cdr. Suryanarayan (PMO),

Cdr GC Thadani (Cdr E)

Cdr VM Sahane (Cdr S)

LCdr Jain (SEO)

LCdr HC Malhotra

Lt. Samant (WKEO)

Lt (SD Stores) Pillai

Lt. RK Khanna (GO).

Surg Lt. AK Arora (Dental Officer)

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## From Riga with Love

*Captain N V Sarathy (Retd)*

In April 1982, I had completed 26 months as TASO on board INS Anjadip. My peers had even completed their second appointment as TASOs. I thought that I have been forgotten by the Personnel Branch and brought it to my CO's notice. Couple of days later, he informed me that I am being sent on deputation to USSR to accept and take over an Inshore Mine Sweeper (IMS) in a couple of months. Written orders were soon received and I spent more than two weeks at NHQ to iron out formalities. My CO who had commissioned a RE class almost a decade earlier and a veteran of NHQ advised me on navigating its corridors. At NHQ I learnt that I was to be the leader of the first group of three, (M83, 84, 85). (IN Ships Malvan, Mangrol and Mahe, respectively). Navigating in uncharted waters of NHQ was a great learning experience. It literally involved both visual and blind pilotage (more of the latter). Well, in spite of all this it was only in early October that I left

for USSR with two other COs and thirty personnel for the three ships. Since we were expected to spend only three months in training and accepting the ships, no Russian language was taught to us. Interpreters were to be provided. Since the ships were only 100 tons, the Commissioning was to be at Cochin, our base port the following year.

The crew assembled at Bombay in June and pre commissioning formalities were done. One of the other CO an enterprising guy sweet talked INCS into giving the crew suitcases and other luggage on credit. On reaching Riga we paid for these items in Roubles and the same was converted to rupee payment in India. A big suitcase costing Rs 300/- cost only Rs 90/- in this Credit-Rouble-Rupee deal. It turned out to be a win-win situation for all.

All of us flew from Bombay and arrived at Riga





our final destination via Moscow, with our personal luggage and plenty of advice from well wishers who had earlier Commissioned ships in Riga. The autumn weather was cold enough for all of us. The first day's hurdle was to sort out the culinary requirement of the crew since we were to dine in a '*stalovaya*' (canteen) till the ships galleys' were taken over. The menu consisted of meat dishes predominantly and nothing resembling vegetarian. The sizable vegetarian crew was up in arms. Even the non-vegetarians had their task cut out. We arrived at a solution, wherein only chicken would be in the menu for the non-vegetarians and our ships cooks would advise the "*stalovaya*" staff in preparing vegetarian dishes. Even then there were occasional complaints of tiny pieces of bones in the soup for vegetarians.

On the second day we had a meeting with the team of Soviet Naval Base staff and the ship's crew who were to train and hand over the ships to us. This was headed by a Kontra (Rear) Admiral, who looked grand fatherly but a tough negotiator. After the initial pleasantries, our first request was for taking over the ships galleys ASAP. This threw them into a bit of confusion as the galley was one of the last to be handed over. It took a considerable time to convince the leader about the urgent need. Even after agreement, it took almost a week. Like a fairy tale ending, 'the crew remained happy there after'.

By middle of November, it started to snow and winter had officially arrived in Riga. We had commenced accepting the ships in stages. The ships were berthed close to the harbor mouth and were hence affected by the sea state outside. We brought this to the Russian's notice and requested them for pneumatic fenders to prevent damages during inclement weather. This fell on deaf years. One evening the winds

picked up suddenly and soon turned into a full scale blizzard, and the ships were crashing into each other. All three ships crew who were off watch rushed back to the ship in various state of undress due to this emergency. The Russian crews were not contactable for providing additional fenders. Our sailors on their own went around the harbor in the blizzard and collected tyre fenders from Russian ships kept on chocks and I was amazed at their 'spirited' enthusiasm. These tyres were extensively used and ships were prevented from further damage. The weather turned calm after a few hours. The sailors were mustered and complemented on their efforts in adverse weather to get fenders for the ships. One sailor's voice piped up, 'Sir Khodays ka kamaal hai'. I realized then that it was an 'issue day' for them and all of them had trooped out from the bar for fender hunting. It was a great tension reliever. The next morning we had the proverbial meeting with the Base Cdr in which he complained about the missing tyres from his ships. We had to drive home in no uncertain terms that technically the IMSS were still Russian Naval ships and we had in fact done their Navy a favour in protecting the ships. By the time the meeting was over, pneumatic fenders had been delivered on board. The 'borrowed' tyres were put back on respective Russian ships with out further ado.

The acceptance thereafter went smoothly and all three ships were taken over by end December. In early January, two thirds crew and the other two COs returned to India, leaving behind the remaining crew with me to preserve the ships and wait for the Ro-Flo vessel. The three ships were then to be loaded on a Ro-Flo vessel and transported to Cochin and floated out. The famous Russian winter then intervened and Riga harbor froze. It took nearly three more months before the Ro-Flo vessel named '*Stakhanovitz Kotov*' could arrive at



Riga to transport the ships. Being ice bound was a novel experience for all of us. To keep the engines and few other machinery in order in the freezing climate, they had to be started periodically. This involved drilling a hole in the ice to free the area next to the cooling water intake for the engines. The ice was quite thick and strong that the crew regularly played volley ball on the water ahead of the ships berth.

On 26 Jan 1983 our crew observed a holiday and I went to a nearby resort called Jurmala and tried my hand at ice fishing by drilling a hole in the frozen Lielupe River along with the Armenian taxi driver assigned to us. There was a massive crowd in spite of being a working day in Latvia. After a while I found that the person fishing next to me looked pretty familiar with 'shapka' covered head. On a closer look I realized that he was none other than the Political Officer of the Riga Naval Base who used to attend all our meetings. We both greeted each other. I couldn't but help asking him whether he too was observing a holiday on account of Indian Republic Day. He sheepishly replied 'Nyet' for having been caught on the wrong foot and quickly excused himself and dismantled his fishing gear and vanished. During the next

meeting a couple of days later, the Base Admiral out of the blue told me that it was dangerous for me to go fishing in frozen rivers. Accidents have happened by cracking ice and people have drowned. I mentioned to him that there were hundreds of others fishing and it was safe enough. With a poker face he told me that I was a State Guest and different set of rules were applicable. I could guess that this was the doing of the piqued Commissar whose fishing I cut short.

Nearly six month at Riga was a memorable one. The crews were highly motivated in spite of the weather conditions. Mention must be made of the timely and regular help extended to our crew by INS Ranjit Commissioning crew who were in Poti/Baku by supply of IN rations which greatly enhanced our comfort and motivational level.

During the first week of April 1983, the ships were loaded on the RO-Flo vessel in our presence and brought to India in May and the ships were Commissioned on 16 Apr 1983 at Cochin by the FOC-in-C, South.

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# My Association with Commissioning and Decommissioning of INS Vikrant

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*Mrs Veryam Kaur Trewn*

It is not very common for persons to experience the joy of commissioning as well as sadness arising out of decommissioning of the same ship. But I experienced it and am happy to relate it although I was a mere spectator.

I sailed with my husband for the United Kingdom during early 1957. He was assigned duties on a Leander class frigate being built in John Brown Shipyard in Glasgow. The Indian High Commissioner in United Kingdom launched the ship as per true Vedic traditions. The Vedic Mantras included the words amongst others "May oh Aditi the bows of the ship be strong and bilges dry". This selection of benediction words touched the sensitive mind of the Managing Director of Messrs John Brown. Just after symbolic breaking of coconut at the ship's bows. He came closer to the group where I and the lady High Commissioner of India were standing and admired at the reference to dry bilges quoted in the Vedic Mantra.

Soon thereafter something more important followed. It was evening after dinner time. My husband was a Lieutenant. Thus every other officer associated with his job was senior to him. We were residing in a hired ground floor flat in Glasgow. It was British summer and we were going to sleep when suddenly a long door bell sound was heard. This was simultaneously accompanied with a thumping sound on wooden entrance door. We could not understand the emergency. My husband came out in his night sleeping gown. Street lights were on. My eyes fell on two black coloured cars standing right in front. Near the first car was an officer of rank of Rear Admiral. His Flag Lieutenant stood close to him. It was a tense moment for us as we had never experienced such a situation before. Without any other

formality the Flag Officer wished good evening to us and said, "I am from Admiralty Whitehall London. I have an important message which I have come to deliver to you." It was a copy of a message from NHQ (I) to Admiralty Whitehall London informing about the decision of Government of India to acquire HMS Hercules. Also my husband was asked to proceed to Gear Lockheed, Faslane, Scotland to visit the ship anchored there at the earliest. He gave a copy of the message and advised to be ready early next morning to proceed to visit the aircraft carrier.

Next several months were now busy for my husband to follow HMS Hercules movement to Harland and Wolfe Shipyard at Belfast for dry docking, modernization and commissioning including flying trials. Ship was received by Harland enthusiastically. Work for early commissioning was assigned on daily basis. All worn old machinery and equipment was replaced besides addition of new modern equipment. It was curious to learn that the new deck landing mirrors alone on flight deck were to cost crores in Indian Rupee. The size and capacity of flight deck lift as well the provision of hot tea and coffee at flight deck itself for flying personnel and others thrilled us. It was decided that old design material in otherwise good condition should be shipped to India for meaningful utilization.

The famous passenger vessel Titanic was built in this shipyard in early 1912 but she sank in April in same year while on its way to USA. One of the officers working on modernization of the aircraft carrier had his relative sailing in the ill fated ship as a passenger. He had posted a menu card of the ship just before the ship sailed from Southampton for USA. This card



was presented to us by the officer as a gesture of goodwill and remembrance.

Preparation for commissioning commenced one month before the date. The menu mainly included western style items of food and Indian Officers' wives though very few in numbers were requested to look after the Indian cuisine. There was general joy and jubilation around in the local Indian population as well as crew members as it was the first Indian aircraft carrier to be commissioned. Important personalities from the town were invited in consultation with Dr. E. Rebeck - the Managing Director of the shipyard which could build 18 ships simultaneously. When the Indian Officers and sailors started arriving, there was not enough suitable accommodation available in town, so some of the ship's personnel stayed as paying guests in private homes. On the date of commissioning hundreds of families could be seen with dozens of Indian ladies in colourful Sarees. Many Irish friends of Indian crew members could be seen arm in arm in the streets of Belfast on that joyful day. A lot of relaxation was made in the number of guests for the grand occasion. In the words of the then Mayor of Belfast this would remain a memorable day not only due to a very large attendance but due to the fact that this ship was a symbol of a growing navy of a proud emerging nation.

INS Vikrant served the Indian navy magnificently and took part in providing essential sea cover in 1965 and 1971. Finally a time came for this great ship to be decommissioned at Mumbai during 1997. It was a sad occasion. Even as a decommissioned ship this aircraft carrier satisfied most queries of visiting public and students in realizing the purpose and deployment of such a ship. Even as a decommissioned ship the aircraft carrier's flight deck, aircraft lift, deck landing mirrors, aircraft arresting wires, engine room machinery, boilers and boats provided enough material for a curious visitor. My husband had written a very touching letter to the then Chief of the Naval Staff.

Two incidents pertaining to my visit to operations room of INS Vikrant vibrate in my mind when the same great ship was visited by families of naval officers at different occasions first one was before commissioning in Belfast when we visited the flight deck and the operations room. The operations room looked glorious and impressive the control over ships speed and various flights and landings were impressed indeed. On the other hand after decommissioning in Mumbai the same operations room was desolate and looked like an abandoned room with chairs to sit and brood. Still we are proud of her and her steel!

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# A Nostalgic Visit to the Nigerian Defence Academy

*Captain Ravi Mehta ( Retd)*

It was over 45 years ago that I was privileged to be part of the Indian team that set up the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) at Kaduna, Nigeria. Imagine the pleasant surprise when we got a call from the Nigerian High Commission, that the visiting Commandant of NDA, Major General Onwuamaegbu, was keen to meet the erstwhile officers over dinner. The dinner was followed by an invitation to the Passing out Parade of the 60th course in September 2013 to be presided by the Head of the State. Six of us, two ex-Army, two ex-Navy and two wives landed up in Kaduna on the 8th of September. We were received personally by the Commandant and the Deputy Commandant at the Commandant's guest house, where we were put up.

Six armed guards provided us security cover throughout our stay. A lady cook who made great Indian food was kept at our service. The functions included Beating the Retreat by Cadet's bands, a formal lunch at the Commandant's residence, a regimental mess night at the Cadet's mess and finally the



**Team in front of the HQ of the NDA**

passing out parade and convocation. After going through about 1400 photographs of the visit, I am placing a few selected ones below:

One wonders how Brig Verma, the founding NDA Commandant, an unknown officer from the Indian Army, belonging to the State Services and without any combat experience, could become a legend in Nigeria and leave such an indelible mark. This could be an interesting subject for a management and leadership study. His sincerity, honesty and compatibility with the Nigerians were central to his success



**Team around the bust of Brigadier Verma, the founding Commandant**



and legacy.

He was helped, no doubt, by the prevalent conditions in the country which at that time was in the thick of a civil war. The oil rich Eastern region had proclaimed secession but the Federal Nigerian Government, under the 30 year old Head of State Major General Yakubu Gowon was determined to keep 'Nigeria One' at any cost.

The NDA under the leadership of Brigadier Verma continued to produce top quality officers who proved their mettle, in the civil war and made a valuable contribution in winning it. Even on completion of five years deputation, the Nigerian government was keen to retain the services of Brigadier Verma in any capacity. Unfortunately this didn't work out. The Nigerians were so disappointed that they refused to accept any other Indian Commandant and appointed a Nigerian instead. Today Verma's bust adorns the entrance to the headquarters, as depicted.

The Academy at its new location has grown enormously. It is now a full fledged University offering post graduate and doctoral courses. It also trains female cadets along with male counterparts. It is an institution of national importance and considered foremost in the whole of Africa.

We were pleased to read the names of the Naval Officers in charge, in a board installed in the office of Naval Training Team in the order below:

- Lt. Cdr M.S.Rawat
- Lt. Cdr R.K.Mehta
- Lt. Cdr Jai Mundkur
- Lt. Cdr Kailash Kohli

A visit to our old home, brought an eerie feeling.



It had been brought down and an impressive defence Guest House constructed in its place. We were looking for the mango and papaya trees, and the 'toor dal' bushes but palm trees had replaced them. We had occasion to meet some officers and cadets who have distinguished themselves in Nigeria.

The first Nigerian Adjutant Major General Zamani Lekwot greeted us in fluent Hindustani. He was trained at our NOAI, IMA in India where he won the gold medal for being the first in order of merit. Lieutenant General Ibrahim Salehu, Sword of Honour of the first course, rose to become the Chief of the Army Staff and is now a successful businessman. Mark David a product of the third course, is the Head of the Senate, and the second most powerful person in the country.

Our visit culminated with a dinner hosted by our High Commissioner, His Excellency, Mahesh Sachdev, at his residence.

As veterans, who served the Academy over 45 years ago, we were overwhelmed by the gratitude, grace and hospitality of our hosts in Nigeria and felt proud of our legacy. It was an experience to remember.

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## Journey to Valsura (1942-1946) Cdr MFB Ward, First Commanding Officer of MI S Valsura

*Commodore Sandeep Naithani*

August 1942 was a very turbulent and violent month in the history of the world. While the Quit India movement was in full swing here in our country, the World War II was at its peak in the West. It was during these times that history of a different kind was being written in Jamnagar, called Nawanagar in those days. The foundation stone of HMIS Valsura was laid in Rozi Island of Jamnagar on **15 August 1942** (someone must have had a premonition five years ahead of time, that this date will be immortalized in Indian history) and in just four months on **15 December 1942**, the Torpedo School of the Royal Indian Navy, HMIS Valsura was commissioned with the motto 'Valsura Semper Viret', meaning 'Valsura will always be victorious'. The name Valsura is made up of two Tamil words 'Val' meaning Sword and 'Sura' meaning Fish. This was a very appropriate name for the Torpedo School as 'Swordfish' was the name of the very successful Torpedo bomber of the Royal Fleet Air Arm. On 26 Jan 1950, INS Valsura came into existence with the motto, 'Tasya Bhasa Sarvmidam Vibhati' meaning 'The light that emanates from here Illuminates All'.

The man, who made this improbable feat, of building Valsura in just four months, possible, was Commander MFB Ward of the Royal Navy, our first Commanding Officer. This officer had narrowly missed death on 14 September 1939 when HMS Royal Oak was sunk in Scapa Flow just after the start of World War II. He was one of the 414 survivors from a crew of 1247, the biggest Royal Navy loss of all time. We Valsurians were very fortunate when on 25 October 2012, his son Colonel Robert Ward (Retd), of the Royal Marines visited us and presented us with a compilation of his father's meticulously written diaries aptly titled 'Journey



to Valsura 1942-1946'. The compilation is a veritable treasure not only for Valsura or the Navy, but probably for the entire nation.

Col Robert Ward has divided the compilation into six parts. The first part, from 12 March 1942 till 3 April 1942, covers the journey of his father from England to India. He covered a distance of 12,500 miles and the route from Poole, UK to Bombay, India was through twenty cities covering the nations of Ireland, Portugal, Western Sahara, Senegal, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Congo, Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain and present day Pakistan. He has described interesting interactions with his co-passengers on the various flights, including one with an American who had seen Pearl Harbour just after the attack.

The next section from 4 April 1942 to 12 August 1942 is about finding Valsura. Here he has mentioned his interactions with Royal Indian Naval officers at Delhi and Bombay, about the opulence and graciousness of the His Highness (HH), KS Digvijaysinhji, the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar and also about the burning of the Town Hall in Delhi and the bonfire lit in



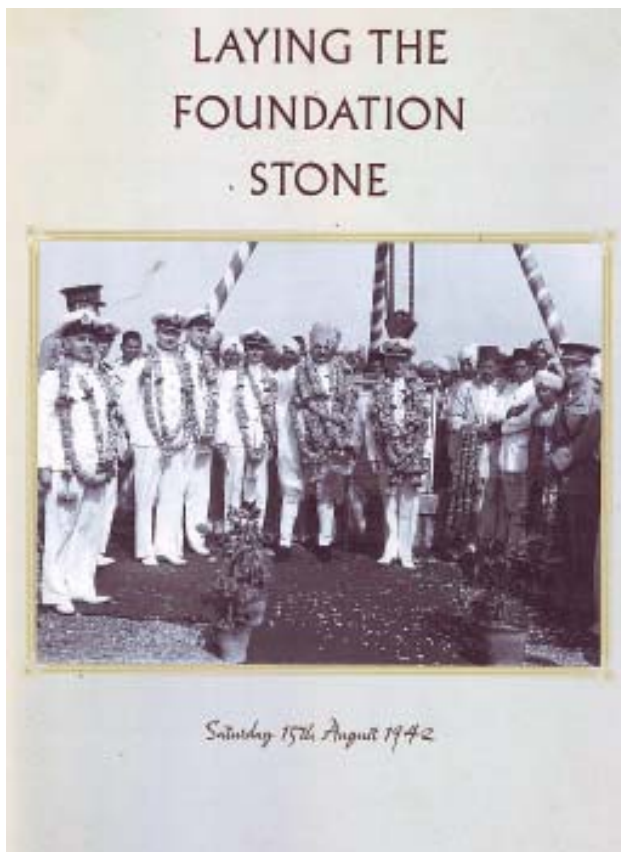
Bombay where people threw their hats and ties into the fire.

The third section covers the auspicious day of 15 August 1942 when the foundation stone of Valsura was laid. The general arrangement drawing of HMIS Valsura is also shown. He mentions that Vice Admiral Sir Herbert Fitzherbert, Flag Officer Commanding, Royal Indian Navy (FOCRIN) was present with his wife and that the ceremony was perfectly organized and done on a most lavish scale. He describes in detail about the ceremony and of the Guard of Honour being inspected by His Highness, the Jam Sahib and writes that HH, was a great authority on cricket and racing and the women of that time found him very charming as the men found him interesting.

The fourth section from 16 August 1942 to 1 December 1942 describes the building-up of

Valsura. While discussing the plans for the construction, Cdr Ward also mentions his visits to Bombay where an interim Torpedo School was functioning. He also mentions about a visit to the Taj and that Her Highness showed him, her exquisite collections of jewels specially emeralds, necklaces with pearls and diamonds designed in the style of art deco by Jacques Cartier. This part is also interesting as they discuss the Jam Sahib's birthday celebrations during which a State Olympiad was held in the race course with various tournaments like hockey, volleyball, lacrosse and also athletic events. He also reveals that he regularly played golf with his friends and the Jam Sahib (and we at Valsura were proudly claiming that we had recently introduced Golf in Jamnagar).

The fifth section from 5 December 1942 to 22 December 1942 is dedicated to the commissioning ceremony. The Chief figure of interest for the ceremony was General (later Field Marshal) Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army (Readers may recollect that in 1942, after the initial successes of the war in North Africa turned against the British, he was relieved of the post of C-in-C, Middle East during the crucial El Alamein campaign and was sent back as C-in-C, India). HH was not available at that period as he was representing India in the Pacific War Council. He had earlier





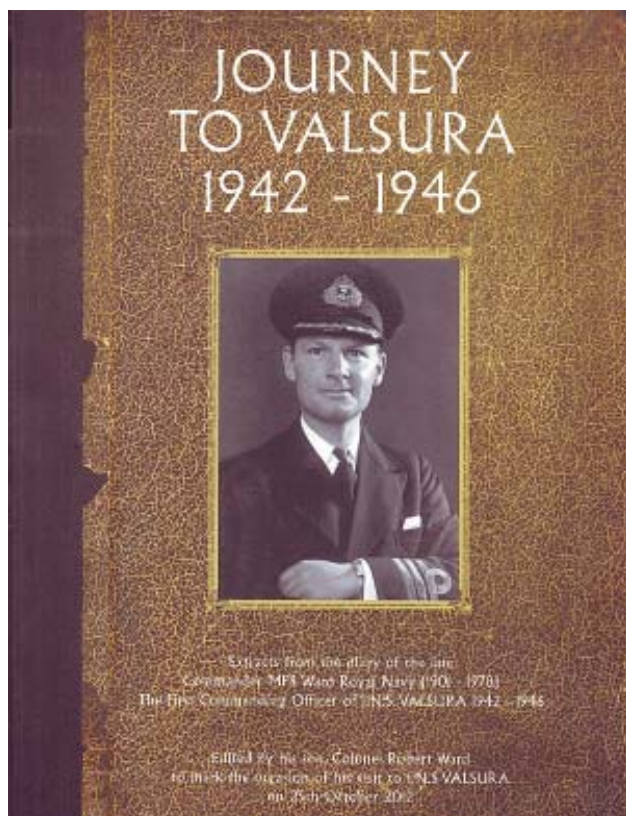
represented India in the first assembly of the League of Nations in 1920. In his absence, the commissioning of HMIS Valsura was done by his wife, Her Highness Gulab Kunverba Sahiba. Cdr Ward has written that after inspecting the Guard of Honour, Her Highness opened the door of the main building with a silver key.

The final section from 25 December 1942 Christmas Day till 16 September 1943 mentions the growth of Valsura. This section is very interesting as it brings out issues of running an establishment about Divisions, Colours, Defaulters, Cross Country Runs, Liberty Men being assaulted brutally apparently by the Police, etc. many of which are similar to those being faced by Commanding Officers even today. He has mentioned anecdotes of the Jam Sahib, the making of the Ranjit Sagar Dam, the Solarium, the tennis and golf matches and many more. He also mentions Ranjitsinhji, the famous cricketer and the Jam Sahib's Uncle

and predecessor and his cousin Dilipsinhji (incidentally the famous Ranji Trophy and Duleep Trophy cricket tournaments in India are named after these Jamnagar royals).

Cdr Ward was a voracious reader and his observations on the books he was reading at that time are of considerable interest. He also avidly followed the World War II and shows his interest in strategy and tactics. Cdr Ward was keen on sports and there are episodes of tennis, golf, riding, shooting with HH and also of hockey, tug of war and other sports tournaments. He has also mentioned that on 15 May he saw the best men's tennis four he had ever seen: HH, Geoffrey Clarke the Military Secretary, Franjo Kukuljevic (Croatian tennis player) who was ranked as No 10 in the world in 1939 and Max Ellmer, the Swiss champion.

I do not want to let the complete cat out of the bag, as each word of the document compiled by Col Robert Ward about his father's journey to Valsura is very interesting and worth reading. The pdf link to this document is being hosted on the INS Valsura website <http://insvalsura.gov.in/> for all to read. *A great tribute from a son to his father.* On the last page, in the editor's note, Col Robert Ward writes, "..... When Vice Admiral John Henry Godfrey (the then FOCRIN) visited Valsura in March 1944, he said it was the best and cleanest establishment in the Royal Indian Navy....." I believe the successive commissions of Valsura have strived hard and kept the sayings of Admiral Godfrey, true to this day.



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## 15 Jul 2013: RIP "Indian Telegraphic Service"

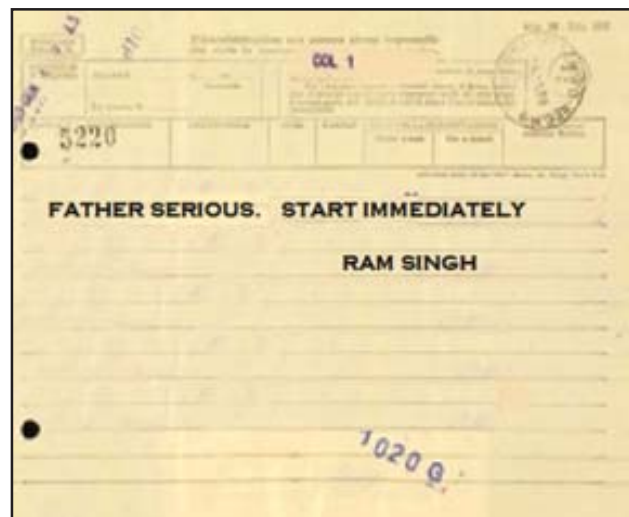
*Commodore BR Prakash*



With the BSNL writing the official obituary of the Telegraphic Service on 15 Jul 2013, the coming generations of naval officers would no longer have the privilege of reading the ubiquitous telegram which has been around for the last 165 years, as a fast means of communication. The sudden outburst of SMS and Email, as a socially acceptable means of communication, in the recent few years, has ensured the age old tradition of messaging by telegrams being consigned to the Davy Jones locker much like what the advent of GPS/DGPS did to navigation equipment like the chronometer and the sextant.

As a young divisional officer, two decades ago, I had my first experience of this unique means of communication when a sailor accompanied by his Chief thrust this sheet of yellowish paper with printed capital letters on white strips of paper stating "FATHER SERIOUS START IMMEDIATELY". Reading the cryptic printed message, the first thought that struck me was the close resemblance of the homogeneity of the letters with men lined up on a parade. The frugal text in the telegram also reminded me of an ominous ring of labored breath of a throat on the brink of terminal construction. But all these metaphoric reflections of mine were quickly forgotten when the poor sailor hemmed to catch my attention. The sailor, perhaps having

rehearsed his lines and countenance well, had donned a somber expression to convey a visual appreciation of his desperate plea to rush to the aid of his ailing father. Somewhere in the back of my mind the faint alarms were ringing of the impending long cross coast deployment for summerex. (Tropex had not yet been coined) were ringing. But how do you ignore the desperate plea encapsulated in the cryptic yet succinct communiqué clutched in the hand of the sailor? This sudden emergency called for knock on the EXO's door, to plead the case for grant of urgent leave to the sailor. However, the EXO was an experienced player in man management, who has seen many a 'chronic case' of "father serious" conditions erupting in the ship like pimples on a teenager face, particularly when a long sailing is around the corner. A long counseling session by the divisional chief and sanguine advice of the EXO manages to convince the sailor that the chronic condition afflicting his father can be attended by other members of his extended family situated closer home. However, a few veteran sailors who have had the experience of being denied this escape route earlier, come up with





a more potent message “GRANDMOTHER DEAD, COME IMMEDIATELY”. The divisional records unfortunately don’t maintain a record of the genealogy of the family and the poor grandmother or the grandfather is sacrificed many a time to obtain a temporary reprieve from the extended sailing. After all, last rites of the bereaved calls for everybody to be around.

There is another set of a unique telegrams “WIFE UNWELL, COME SOON”, initiated by the lonely and forlorn wife in the village. This is the “Just married and wife in village” variety who desperately feel the pangs of marital separation and seek the simple pleasure of marital bliss for a few days. A casual talk with the poor recipient of the terse communiqué reveals that the chronic condition affecting both him and his wife requires immediate attention, lest it festers into a more serious ailment. No divisional officer would deny the man of a few days of conjugal bliss at the cost of the breakdown of divisional system. A well deserved reprieve from the ship.



On the ship, the arrival of the SSRs (Erstwhile MERs) onboard for obtaining their sea legs is another occasion when there is a deluge of these telegrams. These telegrams are the result of the anxiety of the parents missing their wards or simply the homesickness of the young ones out on their own for the first time and are plainly drafted as “MOTHER UNWELL START IMMEDIATELY”. The maternal angle is used as which divisional officer has the heart to deny the despondent matriarch of her wish to see her offspring while she is under the weather.

Many a time exigencies of service (an unplanned deployment) require the urgent recall of personnel who are on a planned annual

sojourn. Generally ‘Key Sailors’ like the missile operator, Chief ME, Chief ERA, the shipwright. This is where the dreaded and infamous “BALANCE OF LEAVE CANCELLED, REPORT FOR DUTY FORTHWITH. CAPTAIN WARSHIP” signal is dispatched to the unsuspecting “Victim”. With a heavy heart, the sailor returns to the call of the duty. The converse to the earlier telegram is a message from the ship stating “20 DAYS EXTENSION GRANTED” in response to “MOTHER STILL UNWELL, REQUEST 20 DAYS EXTENSION”. This extension of the temporary escape from the ship brings immediate relief and joy to the sailor who mouths a silent prayer for the long life for his divisional officer. These extensions are however readily granted to the sea lawyers or to those whose only contribution onboard is to only increase the queue in the dining hall.



There is one more type “THE WAR TELEGRAM” which one has heard about but never had the opportunity to see firsthand. I wonder who that important communiqué would be despatched when the service is withdrawn. May be an SMS but bulk SMS are also not allowed, so may be an e-mail. The extended period of peace gives ample time to resolve the issue.

In this day and age of instant communication with smart phones, internet on the go and e-mails, SMS, IM etc. the dinosaurian “Telegram” has been poleaxed. But then, lest the divisional system collapse, due to the non availability of a medium of communication we need to find an immediate solution and am sure the younger generations of communicators would find a suitable alternative post haste.

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## Core Values

*Commodore Yashwant Kumawat*

Although this article on Core values is primarily derived from my lecture to trainees at INS Chilka, for sake of some research I tried to locate some books and also searched on the internet. What the search revealed surprised me a bit. I found that a fair amount of complexity has been assigned to this simple concept. As a result, most organisations have fancifully displayed a few statements in their offices and called them core values. Surprisingly, some of these statements are not even values but mere mission statements or targets re-stated differently. The way I used to explain core values to the young recruits at INS Chilka, perforce had to be simple. Notwithstanding the vastly superior intellectual levels of the readers of Quarterdeck, the same simplicity merits retention here to keep the discussion at earthly practical levels and not turn it into an unnecessary philosophical discourse aimed at life beyond the ordinary.

Core Values, is obviously subset of values in general. The simplest analogy to the Core in 'core values' is the core of the earth. There is a solid core at the centre of the Earth, which is covered by several layers till surface. The core bears tremendous pressure, exceptional heat and yet remains solidly unmoved because it is at centre of the Earth. On similar lines, the values that are central to an organisation are its Core values. The organisation in itself could be big or small. At international level, every nation has core values. If India was to let go of its core values, it will not be different from China or Pakistan. Supporters of one colour of extremism or the other need to recognize this fact.

At lowest levels, as individuals also we adopt many value systems, these value systems form our personality and character. Some of these

value systems do change over a period of time. These bring changes to our personality. There are others which are more permanent in nature and form our character. Similarly, the values that form character of an organisation are its **Core Values.**

Why should Navy have termed some of the values as core values? Why can't everyone work towards a goal using his/her own value system? Navy needs them firstly because, they provide basis of our faith in the Service and the nation's faith in the Navy. Navy is a serious profession, where consequences of a failure are too heavy for the nation. Yet, it is an organisation, where there are teams within teams. For these teams to function perfectly, we have to have certain permanent set of rules which are unshakable. The values that we know will be followed for sure. This will automatically generate faith amongst all teams within the Service as well as faith of our nation in our Service.

How do Core values generate faith? They do so by providing a common code of conduct. Values are something that are in our minds. They are affected by our experiences, our upbringing, family circumstances etc. Since we all come from different backgrounds and have imbibed different sets of values from the environment or families, we must re-learn and replace these sets with others that are useful and common to all of us. One can continue to follow some of the individual value systems, but the core values must be understood and imbibed by all.

How has Navy derived these values ? Though the concept of listing or stating Core values of an organisation started in civil organisations

well before Indian Navy promulgated its core values in 2003, it does not mean Navy did not follow an organisational value system. The term “high traditions of the Navy” includes its Core Values. Effectively, these values were always guiding the actions of naval personnel. They needed to be stated explicitly as the younger generations rightly questioned all old beliefs. The values that are listed as Navy’s core values, are the ones which have been considered necessary to win wars in defence of our nation. They are essential to work in teams. They are the values, that have earned respect for our Service and consequently for ourselves. The reason why someone outside Navy likes this Service is because the Naval personnel before us have lived by these values. If we continue to adhere to these values, the present and future generations of the Navy will be respected. Even when we hang up the uniform, we continue to have Navy associated with our identity. Therefore, we all have an obligation to adhere to these values whilst in Service and beyond.

Now that we know what is meant by core values and why are they essential? Let us see what exactly are Core Values of the Navy? The Core Values of the Navy, promulgated by the IHQ MoD (Navy) and appropriately abbreviated in an acronym PRIDE are as follows:-

**Patriotism and Loyalty,**  
**Resolve and Fighting Spirit,**  
**Integrity and Honesty,**  
**Duty and Commitment, and**  
**Example**

### **Patriotism and Loyalty**

What is patriotism? It simply means love and respect for one’s country. But what is this country? Is it map of India? Is it land boundaries

or is it its people? What exactly is India, which we must love and respect? In fact, it is all of them and much more. If we think little deeper, most important identity of a nation is what distinguishes one nation from others, its core values. Core values of India are enshrined in the preamble of our constitution. We must be loyal to those values and to our constitution. It is very important to reiterate this issue, because in the current age of communications and information technology, it is very easy for our enemies to try and misguide us to adopt their core values. If one falls for it, he is no longer a true Indian. In the global village that we all live, wars are being fought well beyond the national borders making patriotism to protect core values perhaps more important than protecting borders. Land at borders can be lost and re-gained, but if we lose our national core values the nation ceases to exist.

Loyalty is most misunderstood value. Loyalty in Service does not mean loyalty to a person. It means loyalty to the institution. Individual loyalty will tear this organization apart. We must be loyal to the organisation, to the Service, to the chair. Loyalty once again is not only towards superiors, it is towards colleagues and towards subordinates too. Loyalty to your equals and subordinates is equally important, for team work.

### **Resolve and Fighting Spirit**

Resolve means taking a decision to do something tough and fighting spirit refers to fighting with the odds and obstacles that come on the way. Mere sailing of a ship at sea is tough, add to that the enemy action and we need resolve in face of risks and dangers. But without having fighting spirit, a resolve will be like new year resolutions that are made on 31 December and broken on the next day.

Fighting spirit enables you to execute the resolve maintaining high morale even against all odds. Resolve and fighting spirit together give us courage which is a very important part of a person's character. This courage is not only physical, it is more mental. One must have courage to stand up for what one feels is right. One must have the courage to admit mistakes, not only to superiors but to subordinates also.

### **Integrity and Honesty**

Integrity is a word derived from Greek origin 'integer' which means coherence between two sides, i.e. outside and inside. Integrity embraces inner conviction about own actions. It means being honest to oneself with complete coherence between words and deeds. It means doing same thing when being watched and when not being watched. It is bedrock of self discipline. Anyone can be disciplined when a sword is hanging to chop off the head at the slightest indiscipline. In Navy, that is neither possible nor desirable, since people have to work in their own small compartments without much of direct supervision. Therefore one must be self disciplined. It is much more simple, comfortable and honourable than discipline by power of baton. That is why integrity is an essential and highly desirable value in the Navy.

Honesty, is another beautiful quality. In general terms it means truth. Some of us remain confused and say that it is idealistic and not practical. Indeed one cannot find a more practical principle in life. The easiest way to get out of any situation and to get rid of all worries is to tell the truth at the earliest opportunity. Normally people are scared of a superior's reaction but it is always found that actual reaction of superiors is much less threatening than what one had imagined. Looking back at life experiences, one will

easily realise that telling truth at the first instance, has rescued most of us from several difficult situations. In Navy, trust is very essential as we have to work in teams. Being honest is the most practical way to generate such trust. A dimension of honesty which is less understood is the honesty of purpose. If a work is done with aim of just tick-marking it as having completed, the consequences will manifest, when we least expect it, thereby causing grave damage. Honesty indeed therefore makes practical sense both for the individuals as well as for the organisation.

### **Duty and Commitment**

Duty and commitment are very famous in our country. "KARMANYE VADHIKARSTE MA FALESHU KADACHAN" are most spoken and least understood words. If one does not desire fruits of hard work how will he get motivation or the drive to continue. One is well within his rights to work towards a desired goal. Indeed what the shloka above says is, you are entitled to do your duty but not the fruits (results). The uncertainty of war despite best planning is well known to soldiers. So one must do duty without worrying about the fruits, the results, fully aware that they may not turn out to be as expected. One must enjoy everything en-route to destination. Journey needs to be made as enjoyable and fruitful as the summit.

Commitment means giving oneself to the task at hand. It requires one to take ownership, take responsibility for the task. No commitment can be expected from someone who thinks he is doing someone else's work. A work done because you feel it is your own work will always give good results and associated satisfaction. On the other hand by feeling that I am doing someone else's work, I am only degrading myself to being a slave. We are the owners,



its our country, our Navy, our unit which is affected. Why not do our work with full heart and soul into it.

The last core value of the Navy is Example. Navy as mentioned earlier consists of teams within teams. Each team is lead by a leader. The size of team under you and the responsibility keeps on growing as one reaches higher ranks. At every stage, there is only one way to lead, i.e. by personal example. Like in any other organisation, there are some bad examples too. When we see some bad examples around us, we have to remember two things; one from your position, you may not be seeing the entire picture and thus be wrong in your judgement. Second and more important is the fact that for every bad example there are ten good examples. The bad example attracts

attention because he is an odd man out. As long as the bad examples are odd men out in an organisation and they do not become so common that they do not stand out, the organisation remains healthy.

Just learning about these qualities only gives information. One has to use this knowledge to derive strength under various circumstances. Anyone who experiments with them, will slowly but convincingly discover their potential and benefits. These benefits will guide their thoughts and actions in future till these values become their second nature. Navy after all is about leading a life the way that makes us and our country proud.

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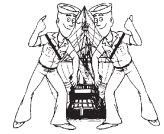
## A Spirited Prime Minister, Circa 1979

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*Vice Admiral MP Awati (Retd)*

Shri Morarji Desai, Prime Minister, boarded INS Shakti by helicopter, off Cochin (now Kochi) one fine morning in February 1979. Captain S. K. Gupta, MVC, NM (known in the Service as Gigi to his friends and admirers) was in command. I had, earlier, transferred my flag to Shakti. The PM was a practicing Gandhian with quite a few of the Mahatma's fancies and foibles. The sprightly PM well over 80s, ate only fresh and dry fruit. He drank only cow's milk. The bovine had to be dun coloured! Now, there indeed was a problem for the Fleet Commander. Even if I could find an animal of the requisite colour in a state not known for the variety of its scarce bovine population, how would I get her aboard and who would milk her? I resorted to addressing the problem by bluff and bluster, a dun coloured animal standing by at the naval base, just in case. Fortunately, the

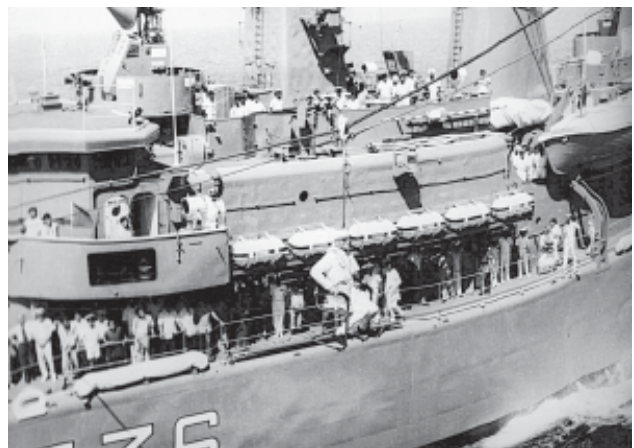
PM never asked to see the animal and was satisfied with my assurance that the milk he drank, during the next few days he was my guest afloat, was indeed sourced from an animal, of the prescribed shade. Before units of the fleet had left Bombay for Cochin, the ship's Chief Steward had been sent scouring the bazaars for the very clearly prescribed and described fresh fruit and nuts which would form the PM's diet. The Admiral's suite was readied for the PM. The Captain vacated his suite for me, the Commander quit his cabin to accommodate his Captain, so on down the line. Every night a very special glass tumbler of plain glass, crystal or any fancy glass was not appreciated, was placed in the Heads for PM's use in the morning for collection and to drink from. We only knew that the PM had had his morning drink from the faint aroma of his person



at close quarters. It was not an offensive odour but the aroma was unmistakable.

We sailed off from Cochin as soon as the Prime Minister was embarked. Everyone aboard was impressed by the physical fitness and agility of the PM, no mean feat at 83. Many years ago in Europe, I had seen Chancellor Adenauer of West Germany, head of a major European country at his age, then somewhere between 88 and 90. I was amazed then. I was no less amazed at this Prime Minister. He was immaculately turned out in white khaddar kurta pyjama topped by a dark Nehru jacket with the inevitable white Gandhi cap on his head. He held himself erect, spoke Hindi and flawless English with equal facility in a measured tone, as if he had chosen every word with great care. Quite a man, I thought. He had earlier proven his administrative abilities as the Chief Minister of the erstwhile Bombay State before it was divided between Marathi speaking Maharashtra and Gujarati speaking Gujarat. He walked around the ship, visited the engine room, spoke to as many officers and sailors he could, impressed them with his knowledge of the role of the ship and of the navy. This obviously was no ordinary Prime Minister.

In the afternoon the PM readily accepted my offer for transfer by jackstay to the escorting ship, ignoring the restraint counselled by his personal escort from Delhi. "Admiral", he said to me in English, "these spoil sports around me, are always looking for an opportunity to restrain me from participating fully in my visits. I know fully well that you would not have asked me to, if you had the least doubt about my safety". He winked at this escort. Aplomb, I thought to myself, a seasoned politician and a leader! The crew on both ships was charged-up to see a spirited octogenarian PM ready for the evolution. He was tickled when a heavy bag of cement was heaved across the jackstay as a





pilot, preceding his journey across. The moment came the Prime Minister of India was ceremoniously transferred by jackstay to the escorting frigate (F 36), as he was piped over the side by Shakti and received by F36. He was returned to Shakti by the same route, expressed praise for the manner in which the evolution was conducted. I was personally very sure he would enjoy the experience, the view below him as his Bosun's chair was pulled over the 'oggin from one ship to the other. It was a happy occasion, an evolution conducted with seamanlike precision. Nevertheless, there was that nagging anxiety until the old gentleman was safely delivered back to the flag ship by the replenishment teams of the two ships. A loud cheer went up spontaneously as the PM waved back to the escort on his return to Shakti. Not every Fleet Commander has the opportunity to send his Prime Minister across the waters from ship to ship on a jackstay, I thought to myself.

The following morning on arrival off Kavaratti, the PM took off for the island in ship's helo. This routine continued for all the Lakshadweep islands he visited during the cruise. He would rest in the afternoons, attend the variety entertainment laid on by the ship's company, talk to me and often with other officers of the Wardroom and on three occasions to the senior sailors on the upper deck. During one evening variety show, a Leading Telegraphist mimicked the Prime Minister so well that it brought down the house. The artist presented his version of the PM's now famous morning brew which so deceptively looked like the proverbial 'Cup that cheers', but without the juice from the dun coloured cow which, for sure, tasted so agreeably different to our exalted guest! The PM participated in the hilarity that followed. It testified to his sense of humour. After the entertainment the Prime Minister said to me on an aside, "Admiral, that was a bit below the

belt". I apologized, told him that I would ask the Commanding Officer to admonish the sailor and said that in the Navy we do appreciate, even encourage such earthy, nautical humour. He smiled at me. An affable person, if ever there was one, I thought.

Prime Minister Morarji Desai was a Gandhian to the core, even to opposing manufacture of nuclear weapons by India even for self-defence. How can you defend yourself with such weapons? I said that the threat of their use may prevent their use. He did not agree. I found his thinking a bit woolly, doctrinaire Gandhi. He did not pursue the argument to its logical conclusion. He must have been the most incorruptible PM we have had. It was amazing how he ran a Government as a coalition among parties whose only sticking principle seemed to be the opposition to the erstwhile Emergency proclaimed by IG. The emergency had been voluntarily dismantled. It appeared to me that the Janata Party's coalition partners would melt away the moment IG made a come back.

We returned to off Cochin a few days later. I bid good-bye to the Prime Minister. Almost a year later he was no longer PM having been defeated at the polls by Mrs Indira Gandhi. As I had thought, his partners in the coalition began deserting him as IG's come back became a possibility. Yashwantrao Chavan was among the first to go to return to the Congress fold. Others followed him. As his Government became untenable, a general election appeared inevitable in early 1980. The rest is contemporary history. Morarjibhai left an indelible mark on his hosts during that February in 1979 by his demeanour that showed a spirited Prime Minister, a memory etched in my mind.

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# They Came Together Again.....After 41 Years

*Commander RVK Rajan (Retd)*

Yes indeed, the Kavarattians, as they pride themselves in being called so, came together on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2012 in Pune after a hiatus of forty-one years. They are those who had served in the good ship I.N.S. 'Kavaratti' from end 1970 to beginning 1972, and their spouses. It was a unique event, rarest of the rare by any reckoning for, it is not known that a group of officers who had served in a ship rallied round the memory of her after so many years.

It was Admiral Paul, the erstwhile Commanding Officer (as Cdr) who had initiated and relentlessly pursued for almost four years to marshal together the Kavarattians, scattered across the four winds of the country. His efforts finally fructified in the winter of 2012. Cdr Parulekar (the E.O.), now settled in Pune, undertook to contact the officers and coordinate movement, accommodation etc. In this stupendous task, Cmde Naphde (the S.C.O.), also a Puneite, assumed the role of 'tanky' and ably assisted the former.

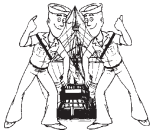
Gregarious as ever, the good old E.O. insisted on hosting the reunion at his commodious and well appointed home in verdant and peaceful environ. As the old mates and the spouses arrived, there arose euphoric greetings, hugs with rush of emotion and a few tear-drops. There also were a few wisecracks aimed at bulges and bald pates. Once the effusiveness had toned down the Admiral gently called attention to the elegiac memory of those spouses and officers, borne away by the tide of time : Kundha, Liz, Meera, Gupteshwar, Manral and Sidhu – all dearly beloved and sadly missed. After the poignant moment passed the Admiral, usually taciturn by nature, issued rather

firmly a 'firman', more like a 'fatwah' though, exhorting all to drop ranks, which edict is being abode by faithfully in this narrative.

The sumptuous repast spread out was a gourmet's delight. That some of us turned gourmants, becoming health reprobates, just for a tantalizing night, could be condoned, considering the singular nature of the occasion. A sizzling surprise was from Naphde who, to everyone's amazement, produced an excellent fare of barbecued chicken. Perhaps he hadn't showcased his culinary talent in his salad days lest his dyed-in-the wool bachelorhood was breached. Some women do prefer cooking husbands!

Aside from the gastronomic sumptuousness the evening was impregnate with resonating nostalgia. Anecdota about people and events, some sober and some quite hilarious, were remembered and recounted. Ageing sepia memories, veiled by the mist of time, somehow were resurrected and vivified. Aches and pains, the badges of age were forgotten and everyone seemed to have bounced back to 1971 and to its zeitgeist.

A parenthetic description of Kavaratti of Russian Petya class will help comprehend the men who manned her during war and peace. Commissioned in 1969, she formed part of the 31<sup>st</sup> Patrol Squadron (5 ships). With serpentine lines and distinctive configuration she looked elegant and at the same time was mean and menacing with her awesome array of weapons and support systems, all packed into her not so spacious interior. Creature comfort was not vectored into its construction. She was commissioned under the command of an intrepid officer and with a set of highly



motivated officers and men. In about mid-1971 Cdr Subir Paul, equally competent with eminent professionalism took over the ship. In the meantime war clouds were threateningly looming on the eastern horizon. The **ante-bellum** atmosphere administered an adrenalin shot to the already prevailing high morale and motivation of the ship. Everyone was totally immersed in the frenetic activities of readying for the impending combat. While the ship was shaping into a cohesive fighting unit she was selectively assigned certain important hostility – related tasks. For this she was sailed to Paradip on three or four occasions. When a severe cyclone had devastated the port she was rushed there to render assistance. Also, she carried a 400 watt Siemens transmitter and installed it in the port for operation during the forthcoming war. The next sailing, with the C-in-C on board, was to reconnoitre the port of Paradip to assess and recommend its suitability for establishment an advance base for forward support during war. This was accomplished by ship's personnel, divided into small groups who sallied into the town and adjoining areas, and ferreted out information as per agenda given to each. An amazingly impressive quantum and quality of information was generated through this exercise, based on which a report was prepared for the Admiral who was flying early next morning to New Delhi for briefing the NHQ with it. Synoptically, the report encompassed facilities and potentials available for base support for ships calling there, docking and refuelling infrastructure, specially for the Carrier, locating and designating vulnerable areas and positions (VAs & VPs), war-watching stations, local communication network available, and many more aspects of an advance base. The Admiral was most satisfied, considering the fact that this 'evolution' was carried out in six

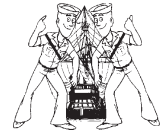
hours of day-light available and under difficult inclement weather conditions. That was a demonstration of '**esprit de Kavaratti**'.

In the next task the ship, alongwith an LST, helped set up an RNO's organization which included office and personnel accommodation. Two trolley mounted 40/60 Bofor guns were installed which added an operational profile to the new base. The RNO designate stated later that his job was made much easier by Kavaratti's report on Paradip.

Due to space constraint recounting of the ship's sorties shall be rounded off with one last, but very significant assignment. With the C-in-C on board the ship was sailed to Paradip where the PM, late Indira Gandhi, was visiting to assess the damage wreaked by the cyclone. Coincidentally, the public meeting the PM addressed was on a sprawling ground adjacent to the jetty where Kavaratti was berthed. Having been briefed about the role played by Kavaratti in post-cyclone succor operation, she cut short her further itinerary and came toward where the ship's company, in dazzling white, were gathered, and indicated that she would like to talk to them. She made a succinct, but telling speech, beginning with thanking and congratulating the ship's personnel for their selfless, humanitarian service to the cyclone-ravaged port and people. Then, without mincing words, she drew attention to the imminence of war with Pakistan, and that there was no doubt the Navy, particularly the Eastern Command and its ships would give the enemy a resounding drubbing. This short message was broadcast through an I.G., thanks to the Admiral's initiative.

Kavaratti's silent exploits during the run-up to the final showdown were a legion : mining entries to enemy ports, patrolling to spy enemy movements, supporting Mukti Bahini ships in





their interdictory onslaughts and so on. During the war she gave a good account of herself as part of the Eastern Fleet. Her **tour de force** was stopping and forcing to surrender the Pakistani troop-ship 'Baqir', who was attempting to run blockade.

One last salute to the ship is for the opportunity she afforded for grooming the personnel who had served in her during that period for higher responsibilities. The C.O. himself made it to the rank of R Adm, while the junior most officer (Sub) became the VCNS. Significantly, one officer from the C.W. cadre became the first ever to reach flag rank from the lower deck. Two others were elevated to Commodores. So much for the ship and her family of people. In sum, Kavaratti was guided by seamless leadership and enlightened management practices. Interpersonal relations were very congenial. Her fortuitous achievements vitalized her motivation and morale. Thus an environment of efficiency and vibrancy pervaded the ship.

All the same, it is logical for one to wonder how a group of men and women could cling so fondly and steadfastly to a mere memory of a ship for such a long time. Perhaps it is not governed by simple logic. The author of this narrative personally subscribes to the postulate, not scientifically authenticated, that there is a strong possibility for bonding between sentient and insentient entities. Further, according to the doctrine of Animism (**anima mundi**) "the phenomena of animal life is produced by an immaterial soul ..... attribution of living soul to inanimate objects and natural phenomena". As a corollary, the so-called inanimate entities such as ships, for instance, ought to possess emotions, feelings etc., in some form and release them externally. As this phenomenon is beyond the realm of natural law no empirical

evidence can be presented in support. However, there have been instances of people experiencing a kind of energy emanating from insensate objects like iconic representations of deities in places of worship. Deriving from this it could be safely asserted that in a ship the vibratile aspect of the 'hardware' can coalesce with the collective human emanations interactively and generate a positive environ. This is perhaps the only **a priori** explanation for the 'Kavaratti Spirit' that impels a band of individuals to attach loyally to the memory of a ship that has perished a long time ago. Ship-breakers have cut, divided and mutilated her, melting part of her body. Moulded into meat-hooks, municipal man-hole covers or similar utilities, ignoble and infra dig, she still serves humans. Yet, she will, like the Phoenix, rise again from her own heap of dust and rust and assume a new avatar and carry new generations of men and women, infused with the spirit of Kavaratti, to the thirty two points of the compass as sentinel of the seas, proudly flying the nation's colours.

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## Naval Nostalgia!!

*Commodore Vijay Thapar (Retd)*

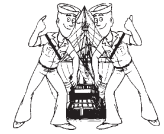
Going down the memory lane of my cherished and long Naval association, nostalgic flashbacks of some of the illustrious officers, with whom I had an opportunity to serve with/interact, form a very central part of my fond reminiscences. As I share some of those flashbacks, (with due respect and no offence meant or intended, towards anyone), it brings alive a range of 'seaworthy notes, punctuated with proficient rhythm & beats' (or off beats!!).

Starting as a Midshipman.....I served on board the erstwhile Cruiser INS Mysore. The Fleet, comprising of the Cruiser Mysore and the 'Hunt Class' Destroyers Rajput and Rana, under the Command of Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, had proceeded on a cruise to South East Asian Countries; Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. The Commanding Officer (CO) of our ship was an outstanding ship handler and an officer of few words. He commanded respect and most of us were in complete awe of him. During a 'middle watch' while the ship was passing through the Malacca Straits, with heavy shipping traffic, the CO came to the Bridge in his dressing gown, went to the Bridge wings with his binoculars, scanned the skyline, took a couple of puffs of his 'Players' cigarette and after a quick glance on the chart, asked the Officer of the Watch (OOW), the position of the ship. (In his mind the CO was apparently quite sure of the ship's position!). When the OOW pointed out the ship's position on the chart, the CO glared at the OOW and asked him how he had 'fixed the ship'. On being told that he had done so by 'taking two bearings, the CO "roared back".... "OOW, how dare you let the ship and that too, the Flag ship suffer from a two bearings fix....re-fix the ship's position"

(sure enough the ship's position was slightly away from the one, the OOW had pointed out earlier!!). ....*That was the CO's beat!!* On another occasion, the Fleet was proceeding to Bombay (now Mumbai) harbour anchorage. The Admiral, from the upper bridge asked the CO if he will be anchoring the ship with 'port anchor'. Keeping in mind the tidal and wind conditions and other parameters, the Navigating Officer -1 (N-1) blurted out, "that's right sir".....this irked the CO to no end and he promptly informed the Admiral that the ship will be anchoring with 'starboard anchor' and asked N-2 and the Fox'l Officer to prepare accordingly. The CO was so confident of his ship-handling that inspite of all odds he brought the ship to anchor with starboard anchor, adeptly. ....*surely, a resounding Naval beat (or off-beat !)*

Moving on, as a Sub Lieutenant on board INS Kuthar, I had the opportunity of serving with a completely 'prim and proper' Commanding Officer (CO). He had some favourite expressions and one of them, during the briefings/meetings was, "you are not *all* there....are you?" It took me a while to understand this *in-style, up-beat* expression!! The CO was also very particular of being attired in the correct uniform at all times. He would wear the 'Red Sea rig' for supper at sea and even though the ship would be rolling and pitching considerably, he would ask his steward to lay the table properly. It would not be uncommon to see the steward balancing himself like a trapeze artist, with the plates and bowls, while serving food to the CO!! That was perhaps, *roll & pitch beat!!*

Time & tide moved on and I assumed the duties



of Executive Officer on board INS Betwa, where I had the privilege to serve under yet another dashing Commanding Officer (CO). My encounters with his numerous typical *in-off-up beats* started immediately on my joining the ship, when I was informed by a ship's officer that the CO had decided to sail out of Mumbai harbour, on his maiden 'sortie' with large 'L – Plates' (*Learner Plates*) over-hanging the ship's side....That is *Learner's beat!!* Furthermore, he also had a penchant of standing on 'Bridge-Wing Platform' (from where he could view the entire ship's side, from fore to aft), while bringing the ship alongside, for berthing. As soon as the 'first line' was passed from the ship to the jetty or along-side ship, he would at times ask me to 'secure the ship' and go down to his cabin.... a *secure beat??*

I still recall another occasion when the First Training Squadron Ships were proceeding to berth alongside at Port Blair Jetty. The Chief of Personnel (COP) was at the Jetty, observing the berthing of the ships. On sighting him, the CO asked me to "take over Con of the ship, from him" and he left the Bridge. As his promotion Board was due and as per the 'grape-vine', he was tipped to take over as Naval Adviser (Bonn) and also, with COP standing on the jetty, I tried to mention to him to stay back as any 'goof-up' on my part would not be in order. Before I could say anything further he had left the Bridge. (Thankfully we got "Bravo Zulu" from the COP for ship-handling!!)....That surely was *UP-BEAT !!*

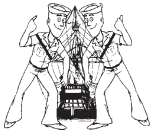
On shipping my third stripe, I served as Deputy Director Naval Training, under an 'exacting' Director. He believed in zero-error staff work. Towards this perfectionist-goal, whether it was a small note or a routine letter, none could

qualify for his approval or signature before the 'drafts for approval' had moved between the officer's desk and his desk, at least three to four times!! That was *Perfectionist Beat!!* And that's not all.... with his passion for work, he desired that no one was to leave the Directorate 'till the day's work was over' resulting in the officers bidding 'good-bye' to the staff buses and using their cars and scooters to make it back to their homes. I would invariably get the rare opportunity (by virtue of residing in the neighbourhood of my Boss!!) to continue working in the Directorate till late and take the ride back-home with him, sitting on the rear seat of his scooter, with his and my brief cases in hand...& THAT WAS A PERFECT BACK BEAT, home!!

Last but not the least, there were Admirals I came across, who had their own "*Beats*". There was a Fleet Commander who later rose to be the Chief of the Naval Staff. He was not particular about Ceremonials, etc. He would abhor 'ceremonial *still*' being piped by the ship's Quartermaster, if he was on the jetty. As Vice Chief of Naval Staff, he would at times walk down from his office to the concerned Directorate to discuss certain professional matter/file rather than asking the concerned Director/officer to come to his office. Another Fleet Commander, would wear his 'Scottish Kilt', board his sailing dinghy and 'lead his Fleet out to sea, from harbour'!! A 'spirited' Vice Admiral could at times be spotted, cycling down to his office from his residence, rather than using the staff car!! These were surely, *Admiral's Beats !!*

All in all, these were 'beats' of *Amazing Personalities*, who were thorough professionals and from whom I had a lot to imbibe!!.

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## Salaam Petyas

Captain N V Sarathy (Retd)

In earlier editions of QD, I have come across many articles on Indian Navy's Capital ships viz. Delhi, Mysore etc. These ships have done the Indian Navy proud during their innings and continue to do so in their second innings. But our Navy also had a squadron of ships, which for nearly three decades served this nation with great distinction and honour. These were escort ships of 1200 tons, and they performed a yeoman service in the Navy. They were the *Kamorta* Class ships, the unsung work horses of the Navy.

The *Kamorta* Class ships, NATO code named *Petyas* were acquired from the USSR to enhance Indian Navy's ASW and surface escort duty capabilities commencing December 1969. The first ship was named after the Island of *Kamorta*, part of the *Great Nicobar* group of islands. She was commissioned on 21 Nov 1968 at Vladivostok. She was followed by four more within a span of one year (*Kadmatt, Kiltan, Katchall & Kavaratti*). Five more followed post the 1971 Liberation war (*Arnala, Androth, Anjadip, Andaman & Amini*). As was the tradition, all the ten ships were named after the islands in the Indian Union. The last one *Amini* was decommissioned on 16 December 2002. On 19 April 2010 an indigenously designed ASW Corvette *Kamorta* was launched at GRSE Kolkata with more to follow to augment Indian Navy's force levels.

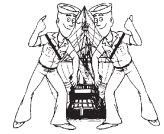
The advent of this class in the Navy brought in new technologies both in engineering, electronics and weapons. The Gas Turbine (GT) technology was one example. For its compact size, it was packed with weapons and sensors. This class was designed as *Storozhevoi Korabl (escort ship)* in the Soviet Navy. A role they performed with aplomb in the

Indian Navy too. Five each (31 PVS and 32 PVS) were based at Vizag and Bombay respectively. However from mid eighties all of them were based at Vizag and merged into 31 PVS till they were paid off.

*Kamorta* Class was a lively ship but had excellent sea keeping qualities. In heavy seas this made the going tough for those with poor stomachs. But serving on board them toughened them and made real sailors out of them. They were great learning platforms. I was privileged to serve thrice on this class of ship in various capacities.

Having had nearly 7 years of close association with this class in various capacities I have served with many seniors, peers and officers junior to me. I still remember many of them and vice versa. The icing on the cake however was the men who served on these ships under tough conditions irrespective of the branch or trade. Their camaraderie and dedication on these ships was fantastic. I therefore have many happy and enjoyable reminiscences of *Kamortas*. The only sad event was when *INS Andaman* sank in August 1990. It was a tragic event for the Indian Navy in peace time. Though there were numerous enjoyable incidents, I have outlined only a few in remembrances of those who served with me and those who other wise served on these great ships.

The men who served on these ships were one of a kind. Most of them were simple village folks who after training were highly dedicated to their ships and their profession under toughest of conditions. The following episode is an example. *Anjadip with other Fleet Units* was involved in an ASW exercise in a high sea state. The going was tough even for the hardest. Only



very few were unaffected. The ship's Ops team was skeptical on detection of the submarine. To prove them wrong, the submarine was detected by the sonar and tracked for a considerable period of time by the two sonar crew both of them from a village near Karnal in Haryana. The CO was amazed that in spite of so much tossing around the crew were able to hold on to the contact. He himself came down to the sonar compartment to witness this. After all these years I am reminded of how a paraphrased version of Rudyard Kipling's "*If*" is apt to highlight the professionalism and dedication of the sonar crew.

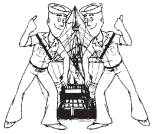
'If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
If you can meet with triumph and disaster  
And treat those two imposters just the same;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And – which is more – you'll be a Man my son!

I was on leave and *Anjadip* was on deployment off Sunderbans. The OTR used to be at Diamond Harbour and I rejoined the ship there on completion of leave. The ship had tied up alongside around 0900h and I reached the ship around 1500h. I reached my cabin and decided to keep my travel bag on the upper bunk. The bunk was in its stowage position i.e. inclined by 45 degrees from horizontal and resting on a bracket. When I lifted it slightly to free the bracket and lower it, I found it heavy and very difficult to lift. I thought that the GO, my cabin

mate, had kept some of his stuff there. I therefore placed one foot on the lower bunk and raised myself to see it. I was surprised to see someone sleeping on the bunk in white uniform facing away from me. I gently shook him awake. He got up and groggily turned his face towards me. I could now make out that he was a young man in Hooghly river pilot's uniform. He wanted to get down after seeing me and struggled mightily to do so because of the constricted space. I asked him to stop struggling and with a bit of muscle power managed to lift the bunk slightly with him and free the bracket and lowered the bunk. He got down gratefully and told me that he was relaxing there waiting for the routine pilot boat to take him back to Sagar Heads Pilot ship. When he came to know that the bunk was mine, he told me that I must be one hell of a gymnast to sleep on this everyday. I was highly amused and explained to him the correct way to use it. I told him that he must be a contortionist to have got into the bunk in the inclined position and still managed a few hours of sleep. He left the ship with a sheepish look cursing himself for not having asked some one about the 'inclined bunk'.

Thousands of men and hundreds of Officers who served on board these ships for three decades formed the cream of manpower pool for the next generation ships of the Indian Navy. They joined the *Kamortas* as rough stones. They were trained, polished and became hard as diamonds professionally. Many officers rose to become Flag Officers and a couple of them the Chiefs of the Naval Staff. Most of them will remember these compact ships fondly and by the end of this year see the *Kamortas* in a new '*Avatar*' once again prowling our oceans as guardians of this great nation with equally dedicated men and officers.

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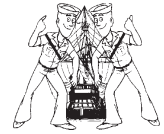
## “Son, You’ll Remember Your First Watch---”

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Rear Admiral Sudarshan Shrikhande

In the summer of 2013, Taragiri, the good ship in which I got my watch-keeping ticket in Feb 1982, passed into history. She was a most happy ship; axiomatically, she was also a taut ship. The venerable Captain Heathwood Johnson (now several years into retirement and still a dashing figure) was our “OM”. Four of us course-mates and two subs from a batch senior brought in young, naughty blood into an already lively Wardroom. Having joined Taragiri in Jul 1981, Sunil David, “Moos” Murthy, Jammy (the late RAdm Jamwal) and yours truly were on the verge of being given our tickets. We had already spent more than six busy and educative months on board. Unlike the norm, the Captain wanted to first put us four through our paces in independent day and night watches before deciding whether we were ready to keep watches no matter which ships we subsequently went to. And so, on a lovely February morning in the Red Sea, as per our roster, after a visit to the ops room I closed up on the bridge at 0745h to take over my green-horn watch. (This was a clear day, but the previous day we had fuelled astern from Shakti in heavy seas. As the RAS officer, I was nearly washed overboard after the FFO pipe burst and the deck became smooth as silk. The Master Chief Bosun’s strong arms and a stanchion that I held on to helped me clamber back.) The OM was sitting quietly on the bridge as one of the senior Lieutenants handed over to me. Now, by and large, Captain Johnson spent long hours in his chairs on the bridge or in the ops room, guiding us, correcting us, but otherwise placidly watching or reading. The bridge used to be whisper quiet, efficient, yet relaxed. He was himself a master ship-handler and gave us a lot of opportunities to do fleet work. As soon as he heard “*I have the ship*” he

said the words that I have used in the title. How true they turned out to be! We were four ships in the formation and the Fleet Commander (then R Adm Nadkarni) was in INS Shakti for her sea inspection. If I remember right, Rajput, Nilgiri and perhaps Talwar were in company. Uncharacteristically, he said he would be in his cabin and asked me to check the intercom with him and not hesitate to call him. He disappeared below with his book. Strangely, the navigator, “Bandoh” Bandopadhyay, flags “Jaggi” Malhotra also made themselves scarce. The Chief Yeo, one Tac sailor and a look-out and I were by ourselves! In just about ten minutes, we got a station from the screen to astern of Shakti; all ships were to be in column. I called the Captain to let him know that I had started the turn and increased speed. He merely said, “thank you, take station.” We were a few miles away, and this enabled me to use the Battenberg and for the Ops room to let me know I was on track. However, no navigator, no SCO! As the tanker grew in size, I was somewhat nervous, not because I did not know what to do, or when to turn smartly and slot into the Flagship’s wake, but because a bridge minus these seniors was most unusual. As soon as all ships were in station, came the signal for FORM FOXTROT STBD. Now, I called the Captain’s cabin and reported it. He told me, “You know what to do” and hung up. Just like that!! In sequence we hauled out and steamed past smartly. Not being a ceremonial serial, there was no need for the CO to be in the wings. I wondered how he could have possibly restrained himself from coming up to the bridge. What foxed me even more was that the NO and SCO had also failed to show up. I was thrilled at having executed the manoeuvre by myself, but also worried at the unexplained desolation



on the bridge. The Chief Yeoman was most helpful with information and inputs that helped me get through the rest of the watch which included getting back to a screen and a few changes in station. I thought he must have felt sorry for me to have no one to look over my shoulder.

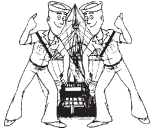
At about 1215h, Sunil David closed up to have his turn. I recall muttering to him something like what Vice Admiral David Beatty said at Jutland. "Something is the matter with the Captain and the NO today...." I advised him to be careful because for some reason, they had failed to show up and might do the same to him! Just when I had warned him of this strange conspiracy, Captain Johnson appeared on the bridge and resumed station in his chair. Anon, I turned over the watch and must have looked rather pleased with myself. The OM asked me, in his quiet and understated way, how did things go? I told him the watch had been fun and most exciting. I remember, rather clearly, him saying "*I think you will never forget your first watch.*" At that time, I did not think much of it, being more puzzled by everyone's absence rather than satisfied by my performance. As the reader might guess, he and the other officers played scarce in the watches kept by all four of us in sequence that day and again during night

watches over the next two days.

More than a year later, when I was in Rajput and had met our former NO in Vizag while he was commanding Matanga, did I become wiser! He told me that the Captain had given them instructions to stay away while we were put through our paces. They could keep a weather eye from a place where we could not see them and to intervene in time if things started to go wrong. They, therefore, spent a lot of their time on the GDP and through a semi-open door in the engaged wing. While they may have greyed a lot during that day, it was a wonder how they restrained themselves from standing by our side! As for the OM, he was discreetly in the wing watching the show during FORM F STBD. Bando and Jaggi as well as the senior non-specialists complied with his directives.

I learnt much from all this. How do you help your juniors grow; how do you give them leadership lessons without a sermon; how to bolster their confidence; how do you build the edifice of trust without which our war-fighting ability could come to naught; how to leave a mark on juniors that will not erase with time but might even fortify?

Some years later, I called on Admiral Johnson



when he was at the NDC and I was studying Russian in Delhi. I told him how much his trust in us meant to us. He smiled and said modestly that the ticket was more ours to earn than his to give. He said that he had observed us for many months, seen how we had shaped up; he knew we worked hard and the NO had full faith in us. He added that he would not “hazard” the ship necessarily for all U/T watch-keepers if he felt that they had not kept their part of the bargain. My take-away was what could I do to keep this fine thinking going? In all ships I skippered, I extended the privilege to most trainee watch-keepers who earned the ticket that was theirs to earn. Most of these younger shipmates deserved to be trusted and Captain Johnson’s thinking on this always guided me. It was a debt that I needed to repay and I hope some of my shipmates would also do it in turn.

Another story may also be worth telling. Once on the bridge, he asked me about what the OOW needed to do if a sailor from the FLYCO reported a crash on deck with an obvious edge in his voice? I rattled off the check list and probably did not miss anything. However, his advice has stayed with me. He said that

perhaps my actions were right, but if I could respond to him with an immediate and calm “Very Good” he would perhaps feel more reassured that the OOW about 60- 80 metres ahead of him would do his job no matter what!

Not only did he have—and has—a disarming smile, his gentle humour is also memorable. In July 81, when we first called on Captain Johnson in his cabin, I reminded him that he had been the President of the Board (as CO, INS Amba) that had cleared us as Midshipmen. With an immediate twinkle, he said, “My sins revisiting upon me!” Not a great start for us...

As the Taragiri we knew and loved sailed into a final sunset, friendships that we built during those days have remained as have the memories and some very valuable lessons in leadership. When I met Admiral Johnson very recently (at a reception hosted by a shipmate from those very days for his daughter’s wedding) I thought to myself, may I always be able to say “Very Good” no matter what or at least, almost no matter what!

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“My honour and life both grew from one. Take honour from me and my life is done.”

- William Shakespeare

“It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.”

- Nelson Mandela

“There is no other profession except religious orders where individuals not only work together but live together. The term shipmate means so much.”

- Admiral Davis McDonald, former CNO, USN

“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

- Lao Tzu





## Twenty Years of Backyard Birding

Mrs Padmaja Parulkar Kesnur



When I came to my current abode of three months – on Dolphin Hill in Visakhapatnam – the green hills seemed devoid of avian wealth. All I was witness to was a countryside trembling with countless butterflies. Swallowtails – as big as the smallest humming birds- suffused the lantana verge; but no birds! Of course, there were the garrulous mynas and the rowdy crows of the garden variety. Then, one fine day, parties of screechy parakeets announced themselves. From the eyrir of my *balcao*, I almost missed the drab Roller perched on a pole until it took to the skies in resplendent blue - a la Cinderella. Soon, I was toting up bee-eaters, pigeons, drongos, and babblers, wondering where indeed were they hiding earlier. In the hills, unlike in the plains, spotting birds is a tough game. The tiered topography doesn't help, nor do the cloudy climes that often play spoil sport.

In the sepulchral silence of NDA woods - my first armchair birding destination - no trill or a tweet went unnoticed; in fact, with no other distraction it commanded attention. Following the sound trail, many times I would be led on wild goose chase, literally, before I finally confronted the 'ventriloquist' bird. And thus

began a journey into the bird world. Soon, identifying a bird by its whistle or song, sally or stance became child's play. To my trained gaze, then, birds stood out stark with the foliage and flora melding into the background!

Twenty years back when I first saw - or saw the first - Oriole in the sylvan environs of the NDA, it seemed to me a golden bird out of a fairy land. After years of living in treeless urban-dump, it was the first time I had encountered wildwood. But as years passed and the noob bird-gawker in me became a seasoned birdwatcher, the golden orioles became more visible, more plentiful, like the 'Rose' of Saint Exupery's Little Prince.

In Goa's Mandovi Base, the Orioles were so common place that I would see them every day, everywhere. Golden Orioles may not be as "common" as the crows or the sparrows, but they are "common" enough to make it to the list of most common birds of India. Come to think of it: sparrows aren't "common" anymore, are they?

A Bangalore-based ornithologist recently compiled a list of "50 Most Common Birds of India" on a social networking website to which a dear friend commented: "These are most



common birds...I would have thought most of them are uncommon.” This comment is precious not because it is innocent and an inadvertent admission of ignorance but because the sentiment is real. Some of the common birds as per the list were Black-rumped Flameback, Paddy field Pipit, Zitting Cisticola and Rufous Treepie! A majority of non-birders or even many so-called birdwatchers would not have dreamt up that such exotic-sounding bird species could figure in the ‘commoner’ category’. So what’s behind this conundrum?

After two decades of bird-watching, it still took me nearly a month or more to start spotting birds and realise what a haven Dolphin Hill was! Why then do we presuppose - subconsciously perhaps - that birds should be seen readily and visibly to make their presence felt?

A year back, I made a Power Point presentation on ‘Backyard Biodiversity’ for the denizens of Mandovi where I talked extensively on birds. A friend, fledgling into birding, asked me: “Where do birds go at night”? Another real riddle! My answer was the counter-question: “Where do they go during the day? Why don’t we see them even in broad daylight?” For a common man not into active bird-watching, spotting birds is an elusive proposition. For one, not all bird species are gregarious or

noisy; many are solitary and largely, silent, and unless out in the open or on telegraph poles or in the garden, they easily merge into the elements of the ecological habitat. Camouflage is their ace cheating card. If we miss the avian action in the light of the day what is to be said of the night?

You see birds when you seek them and when you start seeking them, you start seeing them! On one of my evening walks in Mandovi, as the day drew to dusk and the birds fell silent, I resigned myself to a close of yet another birding binge. Suddenly, as though by a sixth sense, my attention was drawn to a far away tree by the flank. An ethereal, magical moment gripped me. Silhouetted against a tree top, a flock of peafowls had settled in for the night. In the stillness of the woods, I shared a rare communion with them.

In Dolphin Hill, the other day, as I was walking with a friend engrossed in conversation, well past sunset, I really do not know what made me turn to the distant fence. Sitting bolt upright, absolutely still, like a mid-size monkey, was a Great Horned Owl! The joy of such serendipity is supreme. That then is the beauty of birding. After a while, you don’t look for the birds, they look out for you! ---

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## One Fateful Night . . . . .

*Admiral VS Shekhawat (Retd)*

In the middle watches of 14 August 2013, on what would become a fateful night of tragedy and loss two flashes of light the second brighter and whiter than the first light up the south Mumbai sky. News presenters on national television for once with genuine breaking news, tentative and speculative at this early stage of events, report explosions in the dockyard area. Soon there is a name attached to the news; the flashes have emanated from the submarine *Sindhurakshak*, possibly an explosion on board.

As I watched the first reports of bright flashes on television in landlocked Jaipur my first thought was of a possible terrorist incident in the city which has endured so many of them. The reportage narrowed down to the dockyard and then specifically to a submarine. I speculated on that deadly nemesis of submarines, hydrogen build up in a battery compartment as a likely cause. The continuing news coverage provided no more answers except to state the casualties over the next few days - 3 survivors from those present on board, 3 officers and 15 sailors missing, presumed dead. *Sindhurakshak* now lies silent and still in shallow water alongside her berth, suspended like *Trishanku* between her two elements, the surface and the deep, clasping to herself the remains of her crew that could not yet be retrieved. For their families the tragedy continues.

Hundreds of submarines of many nations have been sunk in wars taking thousands of sailors to the bottom of the sea, there to join those who were at the receiving end of their torpedoes. Many have been lost in peace time due to catastrophic failure of equipment or unexplained causes. Amidst the doubts, what is certain is that every member of the crew would have been trained to the highest standards of drill and safety that their navy is capable of. Equally

certain, that they risked their lives in an essentially hazardous profession confident of their own skills and capabilities with full faith in their shipmates and the designers and builders of their remarkable vessels. How galling therefore for their comrades in the naval profession when uninformed civilians and especially the media drum up a witch hunt to look for someone to blame without troubling to understand the technical dimensions of submarine functioning and operations. It could well be that someone may have been remiss through some act of omission or commission; it is highly improbable though that it would have been deliberate or even negligent, much more likely to have resulted from the sheer complexity and hazardous nature of their "business in great waters".

On 26 April 1952, the US aircraft carrier *Wasp* and the destroyer *Hudson* collided in a reorientation of the formation screen during night flying operations in the Atlantic. *Hudson* was split in two sinking immediately, taking 176 men down with her, including the Commanding Officer. The subsequent Naval Board of Inquiry attributed blame to the inexperienced captain for contradictory wheel orders after he was suddenly called to the bridge, in a disoriented state from fatigue and sleep. The uncertainties and urgency in the enveloping darkness and the reasons for his instinctive actions which led to the collision, perished with him.

The *Wall Street Journal* published an editorial on the collision in its issue of 12 May 1952, which remains a classic of its kind on the subject of military leadership, accountability and responsibility, especially that of captains of ships in the most trying of circumstances, and contrasts it with the relative absence of these in most walks of public life. The accountability is for the *deed* and not for the *intention*, for the



special trust placed through the ages in those in command of men in seagoing ships in endlessly varying situations, where often one man's professional judgment and decision stands between safety and disaster, life or death. That judgment can only be questioned by experienced and competent professionals in a proper inquiry, not by armchair commentators in broadcasting studios or file-pushers in the corridors of government ministries.

In the Battle of the River Plate in December 1939, the captain of the German pocket battleship Graf Spee, Captain Hans Langsdorff, believing himself to be outnumbered and outgunned by a pursuing British force (which included the cruiser that was to become the INS Delhi), sought refuge in neutral Montevideo (Uruguay) harbour and eventually scuttled his ship to avoid internment of his crew as per then prevailing neutrality rules. Two days later, he shot himself in the head in Buenos Aires (Argentina) where he and his crew were repatriated, leaving behind a letter. If memory serves right it read "I write this in the calm of the evening after mature reflection. The fate of the captain can never be separated from that of his ship", or words to that effect, and went on to elaborate his reasons, primarily to forestall accusations of cowardice and to avoid risking the lives of his crew in a futile battle at sea, the fighting capacity of his ship having been severely constrained by fuel problems, shortage of ammunition and damage from preceding action. Some such thoughts must have gone through the mind of our own Captain MN Mulla when he chose to go down with the torpedoed Khukri in the 1971 war with Pakistan. Men in command, and military professionals in general, not infrequently assume responsibilities far beyond those prescribed by regulations, from a call of honour, conscience or higher sense of duty, in sharp contrast to what is found in civilian life where punishment is seldom meted out for even gross administrative failure and the concept of duty and accountability is nebulous

or non-existent.

Fifty years ago to the day I write, on 21 November 1963, on a cold, wet and windy morning in the dank Devonport dockyard, Cornwall, UK, I stood formed up with five British officers and the ship's company for the re-commissioning ceremony of HM Submarine Alaric after her long refit. It was an unpretentious affair only a few family members of the crew were present as the captain, Lieut. Commander Philip Cookson read out the Commissioning Warrant. There was no guard, band or bunting, nor even curious dockyard mateys looking on, only a bugler's call as the White Ensign rode up the short ensign staff on the after casing. A priest recited a few short prayers from the Bible, blessing the vessel, its crew and their loved ones. Like most biblical psalms, they were moving, meaningful and appropriate to the occasion.

Psalm 107 is easy to recall: "They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. For at his word, the stormy wind ariseth: which lifteth up the waves thereof. . . .". It goes on, referring to storm, suffering, turbulence and finally deliverance from the hardships of the sea in a safe haven. A parable perhaps for life itself!

Sindhurakshak too had her business in great waters, but her fate at least for the present, ordained otherwise. Not for her the glory of going down in a hard fought battle against a worthy foe - that fate is for the chosen brave few. She may yet sail again; sunken submarines, even severely damaged ones have been raised, repaired and put to sea. The battleship Graf Spee in Montevideo harbour is being salvaged after 75 years though only for museum purposes and to clear the fairway. Ships too are said to have their destiny, like men; What Sindhurakshak's final destiny is only time will tell.

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## A Tribute

*Lieutenant Commandar Nikhil Philipose*

***I wrote this poem on the night of the incident on INS Sindhurakshak. One of the Officers who passed away was Lt Cdr Venkatraj, a senior and a friend. I have written it on behalf of his two-year-old daughter.***

The sound of a blast shook my heart  
And lit up the calm midnight sea  
Without a warning, that burning boat  
Took you, my Daddy, away from me

I would've done all I could to save you  
I wish I were a little stronger  
At two years of age, my fingers still curled  
I wish you had stayed a little longer

Your friends come by & take me in their arms  
And say you have a soul that can never die  
I smile at each one of them and reply  
*I know and so, I will not cry*

Rest in Peace they say? Well, I won't let you  
For there is a lot of me that you have to see  
Every turn, every crawl, every step I take  
Right there beside me you'll have to be

You won't miss a moment you didn't intend to  
My first day at school, my first bruised knee  
I know I'll cry and why not? I'm a girl  
Yet you are the first person I will look up to see

A Submariner, a Fighter, a Patriot  
Thank You Daddy, we are a proud family  
Knowing your ashes blended with the metal of your boat  
You are a legend in the eyes of Mommy and me

I will imagine you proudly wrapped in the tri-colour  
As every gun salute shakes me up a little  
All your friends will step up to give you a final salute  
But your flame will keep burning in this monsoon drizzle

I will bid you a smiling and joyous Good bye  
But when I'm alone I know I'll shed a silent tear  
I will close my eyes & hope against hope  
That when I open my eyes, you will be here...

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## I want to live

*Mrs Dulcie Suresh*

I want to live,  
Abhaya's anguished cry,  
to the helpless father standing by,  
was carried across hearts and homes  
over the seas and distant skies;  
it rent our hearts, disturbed our peace  
filled us with grief for a little while.

Women raised their fists in hate,  
youth took to the streets to agitate;  
politicians who never tire  
used the crime as fodder fire,  
stabbed each other in the back  
one more reason for fresh attack;  
priests told girls what not to wear  
to stop attacks and lustful stares.

In all the chaos and confusion  
we lost sight of the reason  
for grievous cries of girls and babies  
against men who act as beasts with rabies;  
laws, speeches cannot drown  
the voice of victims for a new dawn.

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## Going Out

*Captain Satbir Bakshi (Retd)*

Close the door behind you when you leave  
and turn the key.

I shall stay here

in the dark

for a while.

Or maybe a little longer.

I'll put my thoughts

in a small woen box by the fire

and watch the flames

as they curl over

the three bars.

When you come back

I will be waiting.

Nothing will have changed

except for the small pile of ash

in the chair by the window

where you left me.

master@deshshanti.amosconnect.com

### Time Tide and Tradition

“Those who go down to the sea in ships, have traditionally been a courageous community, understandably so, given the hazards of their calling. They have always done things in a certain way – a way, that experience taught them was safe and secure. Around their business as sailors, they developed their own language – “Sailor’s English” may be as incomprehensible to an Englishman as it is to an Indian.

Over the centuries these practices evolved into customs, which have governed and regulated life at sea. The traditional ways of the sailor, though quaint to the landsman, have a surprising universality, with minor variations which accommodate regional, cultural and religious influences. The sea indeed is a great leveller.

The Indian Navy like numerous others inherited many of its customs and traditions from the Royal Navy. Over the years it has added to them, consonant with the Indian way of life and values, and has dropped a good many which were somewhat out of place. It cherishes its customs which have enriched and enlivened life at sea, simultaneously affording firm and stable values around which to judge and resolve contentious issue.....”

# My Ordeal

*Commander Rajinder Dutta (Retd)*

It all started during the evening walks at the US Club in Jan/ Feb 2013, when I started getting chest pains - angina.....ECG in Mar indicated LAD - problem in Left Anterior Descending, the main artery that supplies 70 percent blood to the heart walls, to keep it pumping...Surg Cmde Kalra, performed Angiography and attempted Angioplasty, but failed as the LAD was thickly calcified and couldn't be penetrated. A hard nut to crack like me... He suggested and referred me for CTVS- Cardio Thoracic Vascular Surgery or Bypass operator to Surg Capt Parag Deshmukh. The surgeon made me comfortable in his chamber and explained me the procedure before calling my wife and taking her in confidence too, since it is a high risk operation.

I, eventually reported to Asvini on 12 Jul for the planned chopping on 18 th.. The next day Surg Capt Parag Deshmukh introduced me to Col Sameer, who had just been transferred from R & R Delhi and told me that Sameer would be my surgeon along with him...The moment I met Col Sameer, we hit off well...An expert in his field with a Heart Transplant specialization from UK...He had a 2 hr session with me & wife Meena and explained to us the entire procedure, as to how he's going to pull LIMA - Left Internal Mammary Artery to bypass LAD, and pull out a radial artery from my left arm to bypass D1, next to LAD...He intended to do it on beating heart, keeping the Heart-Lung machine standby...We left on a healthy note, with me telling him that I had more faith in Surgeons like him than God...May have boosted his morale...but let me tell you, Gods reside in his hands...More than 200 successful surgeries and some heart transplants too...This Doc looks more like a Commando with a Para wing on his uniform....

Come 18th morning, I walked up to OT-10....Cine Max has 4 theaters, this one has 10...Both take you through a sequence of dreams, in AC comfort...Surg Capt Ganguli, the anesthetists and his interns were waiting even as I lay down on the op. table, offered my right arm for morphine measured dose....Gangs asked me, 'Are you ready?', I said 'yes Sir, ready for the trip to the Moon..May God be with you all' ...I started the count down 10, 9, 8, 7...and passed out...

During my surgery, the effect of morphine weaned out, albeit slightly... through half opened eyes I saw my opened chest as bypass was being performed. It was horrific, the pain was excruciating and unbearable, but the subconscious body couldn't react despite the unbearable pain. Fortunately I passed out after some time... My operation was over at 3 pm, but my body didn't cooperate for the next 4 hrs with a high sugar level and fluctuating BP...I was practically at the point of no return for quite some time...But finally good wishes, blessings and prayers of friends and well wishers paid as I woke up in ICU, with all associated pipes and gears at about 7.30 pm...passed out hourly, only to tell Doc Sameer, to remove the ventilator, lodged in my lungs...Next morning, I was very desperate, vomited out, choked, wrote threatening stupid notes to Doc as I couldn't speak...Finally at 2.30 pm, I was free of the goddamn contraption tickling my throat...I could breath pure O2 through the mask...For the next 4 days in ICU 3 beautiful nurses took care of me very capably , as Doc Sameer kept removing my pipes one by one...On 22<sup>nd</sup> Jul Surgeon Vice Admiral Anil Chandra Anand, DGMS (Navy) visited CTVS ICU and spoke to me...On 24th I was shifted to Offrs' Ward...I was



in the Offrs' ward for a week and looked after well by Surg Capt Ranjan (MOIC Offs' Ward) and his staff. The Commanding Officer, R Adm D'Souza visited me every morning during his rounds to enquire my welfare.

All my mumbai course mates visited me and spent considerable time with me...Birdy, Josse', Shrimal, Jaswal, Khanduri, Arun Gupta, Sodhi, Prabhakar et al...The rest spoke to me often and boosted my spirits... SD Singh, Avro, Dixits, Gayatri, Ricky... Sihota gave me a call from Texas.Harry SMSed a nice Gurunanak's msg,. Iwan sent a beautiful msg..All my course mates expressed concern..I am indebted to all of them, particularly Prabhakar, Khanduri and Sodhi, who were beside me in my hours of crisis and

supported my family and kept the course mates posted... I got discharged with 8 wks sick leave... started calling Tambolas at IMSC and US club... People were so happy to see me back.

Today on path to full recovery, I am reminded of the inspiring words of our C-in-C, V Adm Shekhar Sinha, who visited me during Asvini's Annual inspection before my surgery, "Don't worry, Dutta, Bypass surgery today is like an appendicitis operation. You'll be fine soon".

Bottom Line — My most perfect Naval Salutations to Surg Cmde Ravi Kalra, Surg Capt Ganguly, Surg Col Sameer Kumar, Surg Capt Parag Desmukh and their capable team of nurses and staff...

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# INS Khukri 1963

*Commodore Ravi Sharma (Retd.)*

I love the Quarterdeck particularly for the nostalgia that comes with it every year. Apart from reading about the anecdotes and experiences of others, it gives me an opportunity to go back in time and indulge in writing down my own memories.

One is now old enough to go back half a century! So on to Khukri of 1963.

After 18 months of 'harbour' watchkeeping on the Gomati, NHQ thought of giving me some 'fleet' experience. I was appointed to Khukri, the senior ship of the 14<sup>th</sup> Frigate Squadron, which was manned by 3 specialists C, ND and TAS. I was given the only non-specialist department, viz. Gunnery and had under my charge 3x40/60 Bofors guns (no controversy then). My coursemate, Bobby Bhandoola, the other non-specialist, had all of foc'sle under his command which kept him busy dropping and heaving in the anchor while entering/leaving harbour!

Though Senior Officer of the Squadron, our Captain was only a Commander striving hard for the additional stripe. One of the things he was particular about was his officers calling on him at his house. Not all considered that a very interesting activity but the formality had to be gone through. We had been tutored in the NDA by the venerable pukka Britisher Lt Col DM Kee that for the first call on one's CO, no appointment should be made and one should just take a chance. So Akeel Shaikh, Captain's Secretary, and I, two bachelors, found out when he was occupied elsewhere in the evening, went to his residence, were told that Sahib and Memsahib were not at home, left our visiting cards and came back, duty performed.

The next day, the Captain said he was sorry to have missed us and asked us to have a drink with him. I was the OOD that day and the Captain asked the steward to get a soft drink but I said a beer would be fine. I got the drink accompanied by dirty looks and the first black mark from the Captain!

Some days later, we had a party on board. We were all enjoying ourselves when the Captain said he was leaving. In a jolly mood, I insisted that he have a last drink. The Captain went red in the face and screamed that while he could have the 'other half', he had no intention of having a 'last' drink as he had plenty of life left and would down many, many more! That was the last time ever I asked any one to have a 'last' drink!

Soon we were working up with the fleet and clocking busy sea time. On one occasion, I was the OOW when fleet manoeuvres were scheduled. The Captain and the NO took over the con and I stood by. One manoeuvre was botched up and we got a 'Negat BZ'. The Captain shouted at me, "Look what you have done!" I gently reminded him that the con was his and the NO and that I had not given a single order since the beginning of the serial. One more black for the ACR.

And so it was that when he handed over command, he omitted the word 'entire' from my flimsy abbreviating it to 'performed his duties to my satisfaction'!

Captain Pat Telles was our next CO and he was one of the best Captains that I have served under. He could inspire his staff to give off their best secure in the knowledge that his shoulders were broad enough to take the can if anything



went wrong. Indeed this was proved next year when the ship was involved in a collision and he took the entire blame.

We had a great time on board both professionally and otherwise. We acquitted ourselves well in fleet exercises. In my additional charge as the Boat Officer, we worked out a plan for General Drills and anticipating 'Man Overboard', we had the whaler manned with the crew hiding below the gunwale and davits turned out so that when the signal came, we were always the first to lower the boat and pick up the lifebuoy.

We were then deployed in the A & N Islands for about a month. The islands had nothing to offer by way of sports and recreational facilities nor

was there any TV to keep us entertained. To keep ourselves occupied during off hours, we used to go ashore with snacks and soft drinks and a board of Ludo/Snakes and Ladders, find a shady place and while away time till sunset. Then to repair on board for much-needed drinks and sing-song sessions which were raucous what with people like Arun Auditto, Radhey Sharma and Bobby. Our favourite music was provided by the radiogram playing bawdy songs of Oscar Brand!

Back to Bombay and the year came to an end along with my tenure. In my hands was my appointment letter to the NDA as a Divisional Officer.

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## Navlish, Anyone?

Commander PS Vombatkere

### A Word in Advance

Communication only gets as good as we want it to. So if the quality of English in the Navy has deteriorated over the years, it can only be blamed on us, who have let it degenerate without realising the consequences. Although few of us would admit it, what we speak and write today is not proper English but a strange dialect of indeterminate linguistic parentage. While this is mostly humorous, it is a sobering thought that the line between improper English and unintelligible communication is thin; crossing over from inelegant prose to outright miscommunication can be disastrous in the Navy. Let us look at the factors that are responsible for this mutation, and the often humorous and sometimes not-so-funny results

of writing and speaking "*Navlish*".

### Our Colonial Legacy

Veteran journalist Jyoti Sanyal, in his book "*Indlish*", dissects Indian English and explains how and why we mutilate English, usually with humorously disastrous results. He explains that pompous verbosity and circumlocution were employed as linguistic subterfuge since colonial times to make prose obscure and oblique. This is amply evident in our writing style, where our penchant for the passive voice stands out. However, not content with mere passivisation; we seem compelled to aggravate it by dropping essential components, resulting in sentences such as "It is therefore requested to forward ..." (just *what* is being requested here?);



apparently, “Kindly forward —” just will not do, at least as far conveying a message or directive is concerned; we seem immovably bound by hoary naval tradition!

Then we perform a wonderful abbreviation of verbiage, where we drop what we feel are unnecessary letters, resulting in screamers such as: “AC ON – Keep Me *Close*” (how *close* can you keep a door?); “Out of *Bound*” (makes you want to *bound* right out of there!); “*chocking* agents” taught in NBCD courses (are these people who supply chocks for ships in dry docks?); and “Centre for *Advance* Technology” (where we could study technologies that are yet to be invented!). Contrast this with the forcible addition of letters in words where they have no right to be: we have discussions on how the hull of a ship has to be “scrapped” in refit (if we *scrap* the hull, where do we get a new one from?). Such are the pitfalls of carelessly adding a letter here or dropping one from there!

### **‘Articles’ of War, ‘Capital’ Punishment and Comma-tose Language**

Another bugbear is the usage of articles *a*, *an* and *the*. We discover that we belong to “Indian Navy” (not *the* Indian Navy); we interact with “*the* friendly neighbours”; and we look for “*an* information” on something. This indiscriminate insertion and removal of articles is tantamount to a declaration of war on the language!

Insult is added to this linguistic injury by a selective blindness to the requirement of capitalising the first letters of certain words (such as government and navy) where they represent the institution and not merely nouns. I recall once being directed to list out, in the course of work, some “*polish* equipment”, which I took to mean equipment originating in

the east European country and not shoe-shine gear. Thankfully, I was right and the list came out fine. This is in contrast to the forcible capitalisation of the first letters of some words, which would be truly ‘*capital*’ punishment to read!

Another visible feature of *Navlish* is our inordinate love for commas (both common and inverted). I once counted as many as twenty-five commas in an official letter of 250 words. Such prose would render any lover of the language *comma-tose* with shock. We also freely confuse plurals with possessives, with results like “forum’s”, “media’s”, “data’s” and “equipment’s”; and drop the inverted comma as in the case of “ships staff” (can *ships* really staff anything?). Let’s also not forget “Officer’s Mess” and “Sailor’s Institute” (for *which* officer / sailor?); and “one of the component...” (is there only *one*?).

### **Misspellings and Malapropisms**

The etymologies of most naval terms are lost in the mists of time, and we use them out of sheer habit in the absence of a more current or appropriate substitute. Over the passage of time, as in the game of ‘Chinese whispers’, these word and phrases have been gradually corrupted, with bizarre results.

We have sailors “*faking*” down a line or rope (so is the rope real or imaginary?) and a ship on “*chokes*” (must be difficult to breathe in there!). Some unfortunates have been known to ‘*loose*’ their identity cards (they should have bound them *tightly* about their necks!) while others are foolish enough to indulge in ‘*lose*’ talk (maybe the meaning is lost to us!). Other gems include “*fret*” for “fraught” and “*gambit*” for “ambit” – Malapropisms abound, and many of us are guilty of linguistic and grammatical misdemeanours.



Take the word *cryptic*, which is used thus: “make a *cryptic* fax” (obviously these people never did daily crosswords!). One would think that this was totally against the “clarity” part of the ABCs of naval communication, but perhaps we must think again. Another example is the word “highly”, which is usually wrongly substituted for “easily”, thus: “he could have highly told the EXO” (how high – from the masthead?).

### The Perils of “Navalese”

I suppose every naval officer has read of equipment that is “*on-board*”, or of equipment undergoing “*on board*” trials. This cavalier approach towards hyphenation has its origins in “*Navalese*”, a subset of *Navlish*. A prime example is that peculiar word, “*under-trainee*”, which should either have been “under training” or “trainee”, but has somehow ended up becoming a confused combination of both. “*Signalese*” also finds its way into *Navlish*, as in these examples: “... recommended *view*—” and “... will be done *post*—”.

All of us have heard the order “*coorch* position, place” during PT. I agonised over this incomprehensible instruction for over a decade before the light dawned: it was actually “*crouch* position”! I came across another common but seemingly unfathomable term at sea during my ‘sub’s courses’: “fresh water *tanky*”, who is the engine room sailor responsible for operating valves to provide fresh water in the ship. It took me several years to decipher this: he is the man who *turns* the valves (using a distinctive lever or *key*) to supply fresh water!

### ‘Tandoori’ English and Other Transgressions

We must admit that none of us can call English his or her mother tongue. English is, all said

and done, a foreign language to us all, foisted upon us by our erstwhile Imperial rulers. But we make the most of this imposition, claiming it an excuse for the most atrocious blunders. *Tandoori English* is the term I have coined to cover our direct translations from the vernacular to English. So we have phrases such as “... till such time it doesn’t ...”; “... since two years”; “... having — system on board”; “... having a crew of —”; the list is endless – and I am ‘having’ goose-bumps just thinking of it! This is supplemented by common ‘Indianisms’ such as “*cope up*” (can anybody *cope down*?); “*explain/say me*” and “*tell to me*”; “*more better/faster*”; “*very extremely*”; “*repeat again*”; “*suppose if...*” and “*etc, etc*”.

There are many other examples: “the device can be communicated via RS-232” (the *whole device*? I thought only *information* could be communicated!); “I have *personally* spoken ...” (how else – *impersonally*?); “the *desirous* design features are as follows” (I thought only the *designer* would be desirous of those features!), and “we shall now distinguish / differentiate — and —” (*distinguish* with what award? And I always thought that *differentiation* was a mathematical operation in calculus!).

We also frequently interchange words that are superficially similar in appearance but actually different in meaning: “*few*” vs. “*a few*”; “*little*” vs. “*a little*”; and “*hung*” vs. “*hanged*” (the difference between a *hung* parliament and one that has been *hanged* is obvious!). And haven’t we seen bio-datas announcing that the person is an “*alumni*” of so-and-so academy?

### Naval Correspondence

Naval letter-writing manages to incorporate most of these transgressions. We have “It is pertinent to mention that” (would it be mentioned if it were not pertinent?) and “... also



relevant *in this regard*' (in which other regard could it be relevant?). Such redundant phrases are typical of *Navlish*, which after all has evolved from its colonial ancestor, *Officialese*.

## Technology Tangles and Grammatical Garbling

Word processors (what we called things like Microsoft Word twenty years ago) can, if unchecked, mix words and mangle grammar with amazing ease. I am faced with such hilarious 'corrections' as: "*defecation*" (for 'defectation'), "*indigestion*" (for indigenisation) and, believe it or not, "*commode*" (for Commodore)!

Besides these tangles with technology, we have also developed new sentence styles: the *meandering sentence* begins in a coherent manner, but loses the thread of logic somewhere along the way, and after a while the reader is left wondering what it intended to convey in the first place. The *hanging sentence* results when an over-zealous editor goes overboard in pruning a long passage, resulting in bits and pieces that cannot sustain logic or convey meaning by themselves.

These oddities are usually a result of careless "cut-paste", which has very much become the norm, with our faithful adherence to the maxim

"look back and march forward". How often do we give thought to whether we are looking back at the right thing, or marching forward in the right direction?

## The Last Word

Although it might appear so, *Navlish* has done no damage to the English language. English has survived only because it embraced every linguistic challenge it faced; a language endures only if it can remain alive. Having made it clear that I do not wish to defend the purity of the English language, let me now state my case: there is nothing wrong in creating an arcane dialect known only to our small naval community; in fact, it would be a good thing since it improves group cohesion and enhances the feeling of belongingness. However, as long as it remains non-standard, inconsistent and undocumented, we run the serious risk of confusing ourselves as a professional community, which is *not* a good thing for a fighting service.

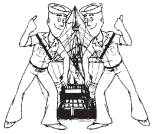
So I exhort the reader to take pains to be correct in the spoken and written word and to keep the style simple and direct. It is far better to write the English we speak than to speak the English we write!

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## Time, Tide and Tradition

(Continued from page 78)

".....This book assembles the customs and traditions by which the Indian Navy lives and elucidates guidelines of behaviour for which a naval officer is looked up to, not only by those whom he has the privilege to lead, but also by his countrymen at large. Gentlemen in white uniform are expected to live up to these traditions, as timeless as the tide that washes our shores."



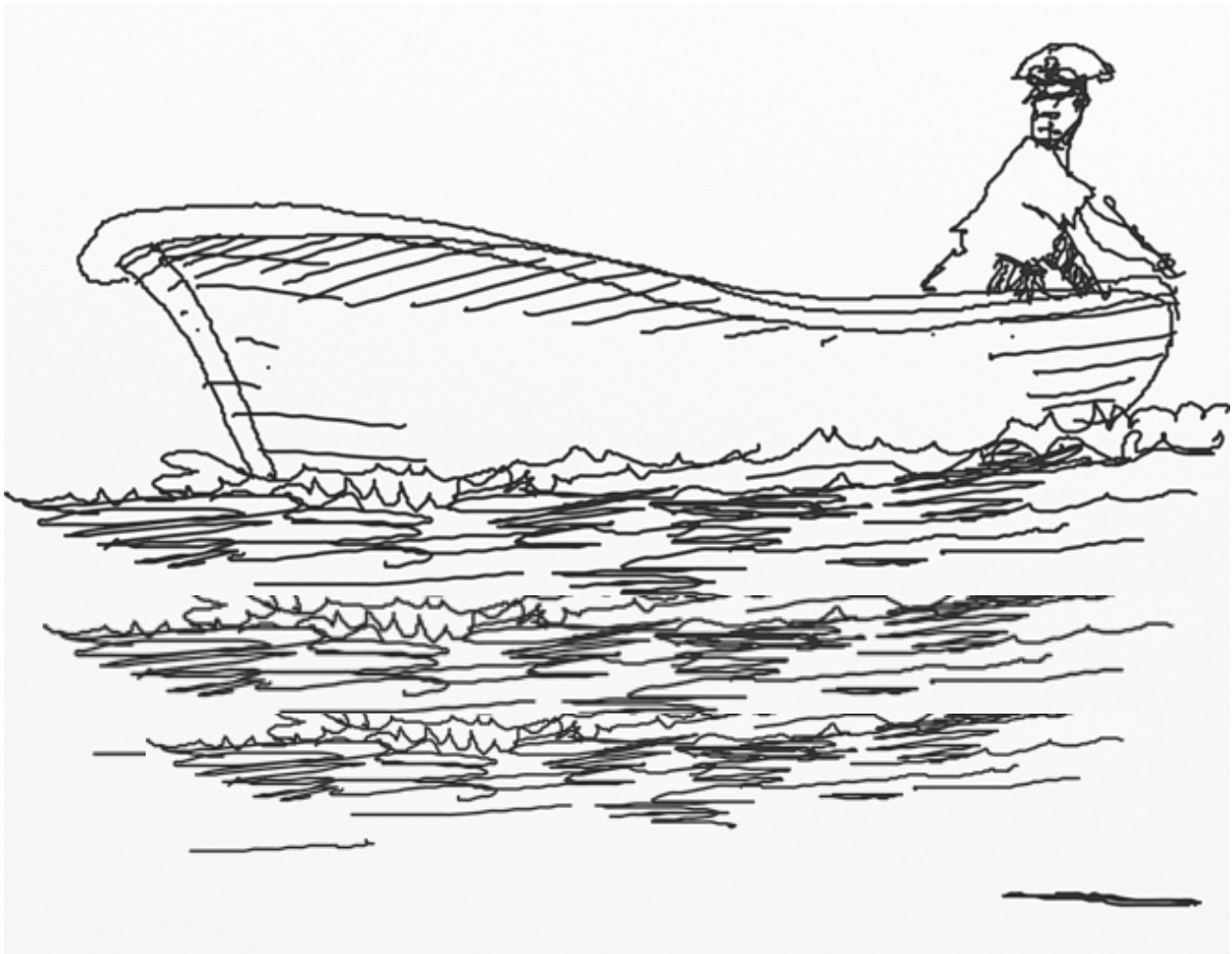
## Indian Navy .....then.

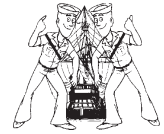
*Commodore HML Saxena (Retd)*

A lot has been written, and is on record about the growth of the Navy. My generation is proud to be a part of that...., joining just after partition and retiring in eighties. This is not only about the size but also the atmosphere, environment, attitude, priorities, and the way of life, then. Today some may find this very different, if not strange.

Those were the days when the present Naval Dockyard was not even a Blue Print. We saw the idea of expansion taking a concrete shape. Today it is difficult to visualize, what was like

then. There was only one alongside berth .... the present inner side of the Inner Breakwater, apart from a few in the Wet Basin. Ships used to spend all the time at the anchorage. Boats were the lifeline, and every one carried a copy of the boat routine in one's wallet. The maxim was that a "ship is judged by its boats". Boats were called to the ladder ten minutes prior to their scheduled departure. Some boats crew took pride in their punctuality and skill and insisted that they be called only five minutes before.





Boats were midshipmen's command....the first command which one is so proud of. Boats taught us not only boat handling and seamanship, but also man management. Managing the crew and controlling the last boat of liberty men, not all very sober, was a good grooming ground. If the boat was damaged due to one's fault, his 'presence was required onboard' till repairs were completed and boat made seaworthy.

It was then a small ship Navy. A Cruiser had just inducted and specially selected officers and men were deputed to learn the art of managing a capital ship. We saw the induction of submarines and the Aircraft Carrier, followed by the Russian ships necessitating simultaneous management of different sets of equipment.

Radars on ships were of world-war vintage. Navigational radar was still in experimental stage, and one had to depend heavily on 'eyeball'. Lookouts were trained to spot ships silhouettes in dark nights, and some even in estimating the range and inclination of ships to perfection. Manoeuvres were carried out with ships darkened. Standard distance was 2 cables between small ships, and 3 cables for larger ships and others. Night Encounter Exercise was normally the last exercise of the day, before ships took up the night formation. OOWs with binoculars round their neck and distance meter in their hand moved round the pelorus to maintain station. Navigation was

entirely by stars and the sun. Morning and evening starsights, and Meridian Altitude at noon were the rituals to be followed religiously.

Partition saw the division of the small Royal Indian Navy. Both sides had an imbalance in manpower. Pakistan was short of officers, and India that of senior sailors. It took long time to overcome that. Senior most Indian Officer was of the rank of Captain. Frigates and destroyers were Lt.Cdr's command, and officers on board were very young. Only Capt (D) and Captain (F) commanding the Squadrons had specialists on board. Specialist Courses then were still in UK. Only three or four officers were sent for specialization every year.

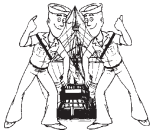
Sailors had to work hard to close the huge gap created by partition, and young officers had to help. Getting responsibility, and accepting and proving it was a challenge of the time, for all, ....from Leading Seamen to young Captains. There was a bond of understanding, and the will to accept any challenge, based on mutual trust and cooperation, and we learnt to do more difficult things together. In this process juniors could discuss anything and every thing with seniors, and seniors listened patiently, and encouraged that every idea is worth giving a thought. There was a sense of contribution and belonging amongst all.

People today may consider it the 'The Luxury of a Small Service.'

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"Now these are the laws of the Navy, Unwritten and varied they be;  
And he that is wise will observe them, Going down in his ship to the sea;  
As nought may out run the destroyer, Even so with the law and its grip, For the strength of the ship is the Service, And the strength of the Service is ship."

- Rear Admiral R. Hopwood



## Some Memorable Farewell Speeches

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*Vice Admiral A C Bhatia (Retd)*



All of us have attended many farewell functions on transfers and retirements, including our own. Usually these are occasion to say 'a few words' by the host and the officer being honoured. It is tenure and to the larger interest of the Service. A tribute is also paid to the contribution by his companion for life towards his success and popularity. The speech usually concludes with all good wishes for the departing shipmate and his family; Godspeed, good fortune and sound health. Criticism and fault-finding is out of place.

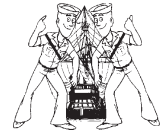
I have attended my share of farewell functions. Speeches were mostly in line with the 'usual' except a few when the speeches and responses were special and are etched in my memory for the wit and humour. In this piece, I am sharing a few with the readers.

### **Rear Admiral KR Nair**

It was an evening function to say farewell to Rear Admiral KR Nair (Jerry to friends), Chief of Personnel on his transfer to Visakhapatnam as the first Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command in Jul 67. Significantly, Jerry served two tenures as COP, the first as a Commodore, followed by tenure as Chief of Staff, Indian Fleet and then back as COP in flag rank.

About an hour into the party Admiral AK Chatterji, CNS indicated that it was time to leave. Just then there was a loud demand by the gathering that CNS says 'a few words'. CNS said that it was not customary to have a speech on transfer. However, mutual friends and contemporaries insisted that it was in fact





Jerry's farewell from NHQ as he will retire from Vizag on completion of his tenure.

Thus CNS had to say a few words. He said that it had been decided to implement the Soviet Project Report for creation of a composite Naval Base including a dockyard at Vizag. The job was a great challenge and he (CNS) and the Govt. were convinced that Jerry was the most suitable Flag Officer to head the Command at that critical time. He wished Jerry a grand success; in his success lay the future of the Service.

Jerry's response was brief. He said "As you know, I have served two tenures as COP and have been assisted and advised by five DOPs, all officers of distinction and objective in dealing with personnel matters. They shared a belief on what to do with officers who need to improve their performance and conduct. Let us accept that the Service has its share of good and not so good officers; some were placed on quarterly reports, a few others were wife beaters, and then some who were quarrelling with their Commanding Officers, shipmates and so on. These five DOPs had a common doctrine and their recommendation was, 'Sir let us send this blighter to Vizag that will set him right'. Friends, in keeping with that tradition, it is my turn now!"

### **Rear Admiral BA Samson**

A function was held at INS India lawns in Dec 66 to bid farewell to Rear Admiral BA Samson (Chippy to friends). Born 1916, Chippy was the second senior-most Flag Officer, next only to CNS, but was retiring at 50, in keeping with the then tenure system of three years in two-Star Rank.

Admiral AK Chatterji, CNS paid handsome

compliments, recalling the highlights of Chippy's highly successful career, including NA, London, COP, Commandant, NDA and Flag Officer Commanding Indian Fleet. He concluded, "Chippy is an outstanding officer and, but for me, would have been your Chief today!"

In his response, Chippy thanked CNS for all the good thoughts but added that he was in the South Block earlier that day, where he ran into GOC-in-C, Eastern Army Command, Lt Gen Sam Manekshaw. Sam asked, "Chippy, I have learnt that you are here for your farewell function. Aren't you too young to retire?"

Chippy replied, "Sam, I am young but it is time when I must move on to make way for older officers!"

### **Rear Admiral PS Mahindroo (Peter to friends) retired in Feb 73.**

At his farewell, Admiral SM Nanda, CNS applauded the outstanding qualities of Peter and his great contribution to the development and growth of the Service. He spoke eloquently about the remarkable career including command of cruiser Delhi, commissioning Commanding Officer of Vikrant, Commodore Superintendent, Naval Dockyard Mumbai, Chief of Material and DGNP Bombay. In conclusion CNS said that Peter had set very high standards and was an excellent role model for the coming generation.

In response, Peter opened by saying, "Thank you, Sir. You have been very generous in all that you have said about me and I feel elated. However, I am wondering, if all that you have stated is true, then why am I retiring today!"

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# My Time in the Royal Indian Navy

Late Lieutenant B R Pasricha, RINVR

When WW II broke out, I was working as a Lecturer at Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow and drawing a salary of Rs 200/-. This was a very decent amount and I was living comfortably looking after my sister, two brothers and a cousin. Since this college was only for girls, one day my principal called me and said that she was not happy to have a young bachelor on the faculty. When I told her that I was due to get married next month on 12th October 1940, she accepted that I could continue.

After I got married and our first child was born, there were still no financial problems as the cost of living remained low. However, inflation started rising rapidly in early 1943, due to World War II and I found it difficult to make both ends meet. I was lucky to soon get selected as a Civilian Gazetted Officer under MOD and went to Allahabad for training at their Ordnance Depot. Before I could complete this training, I got a call to appear before SSB, Jubbulpore and got selected for an Emergency Commission in the Royal Indian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RINVR). Because I was wearing specs, I was given the Special Branch.

I reported to RINS Feroze at Malabar Hills, Bombay on 2nd December, 1943 as a Sub Lieut (Spl) RINVR. The training there was short and merely an introduction to the Royal Indian Navy. All that I remember of this training is the remark of the Sergeant Major, RINR:-

“A Good Conduct Badge is six months of undetected crime.”

After completing training in January 1944, I was posted to HMIS Venduruthy, Cochin. Soon, I

requested my father to arrange for my wife and son to join me from Lahore. He very wisely sent my younger brother to escort them to Cochin, spending five days enroute in the train. However, NOIC Cochin called



me to his office and desired that I must proceed to New Delhi, within an hour after my wife was due to arrive. This was to attend a three week training course named **Josh**, which was for

counter-propaganda against the campaign being carried out by the Japanese. However, he was kind enough to concede to my request to postpone my departure by a day and also arranged for me to fly to Delhi by an RIAF plane.

This enabled me to receive them and put them up with a friend in Ernakulam. After I returned from New Delhi, we shifted into allotted accommodation inside Cochin Naval Base.

My job in Cochin, as the Ops Room Officer, was to keep track of the movements of all vessels - Allied, Japanese or German, so that timely warning could be given to the Coast Battery, which had been asked to engage enemy U boats. Three officers manned this Plotting Room round the clock, with duty hours in three shifts: from 1400 - 2200 hrs on Day 1 and from 0600 – 1400 hrs and again 2200 – 0600 hrs on Day 2 and Day 3. Thereafter we were totally free the next day. We soon made friends with the Army officers manning this Coast Battery and then arranged regular

**I enclose the article my late father had written a long time back.**

-Vice Admiral V Pasricha (Retd.)



picnics within 40 miles of Ernakulam. Often, we had meals together at the residences of officers with families, or in the Mess with those who were bachelors/their families had not joined.

Our job was not strenuous, even on night duty. Basically, we had to attend to telephone calls from the Coast Battery, identify ship movements, plot them on a chart and update this with inputs received from other sources. Usually these moving objects turned out to be Dhows/ small fishing boats. Life was very comfortable and the pay-packet substantial, with the free rations issued on British Scales being substantial. For those of us, who did not eat beef, we got 120 eggs every month.

After a year's service, I got promoted to Lieutenant and my monthly salary became Rs 1,100. Even though hard drinks were cheap and freely available, I decided not to start, thinking I may become addicted and then not be able to afford them after demobilisation. Even at formal parties, when the King's health was toasted, I stuck to soft drinks, using (or perhaps misusing) my religion, giving the plea that my religion did not permit me to drink.

We were having a very comfortable and enjoyable time at Cochin, when in November 1944 I received the sad news of the sudden death of my father. Being the eldest, my presence was necessary at Lahore. My CO was kind enough not only to sanction leave, but also issue a free travel warrant. His kind gesture proved to be rather expensive. As I had not completed one full year of service, later CDA not only ruled that a free warrant was not admissible, but also did not grant me the benefit of the fare applicable on a D Form.

After the death of my father, my presence was required up North, to settle family affairs. I was then posted on compassionate grounds as Naval Officer (Appointments) at NHQ. As RIN

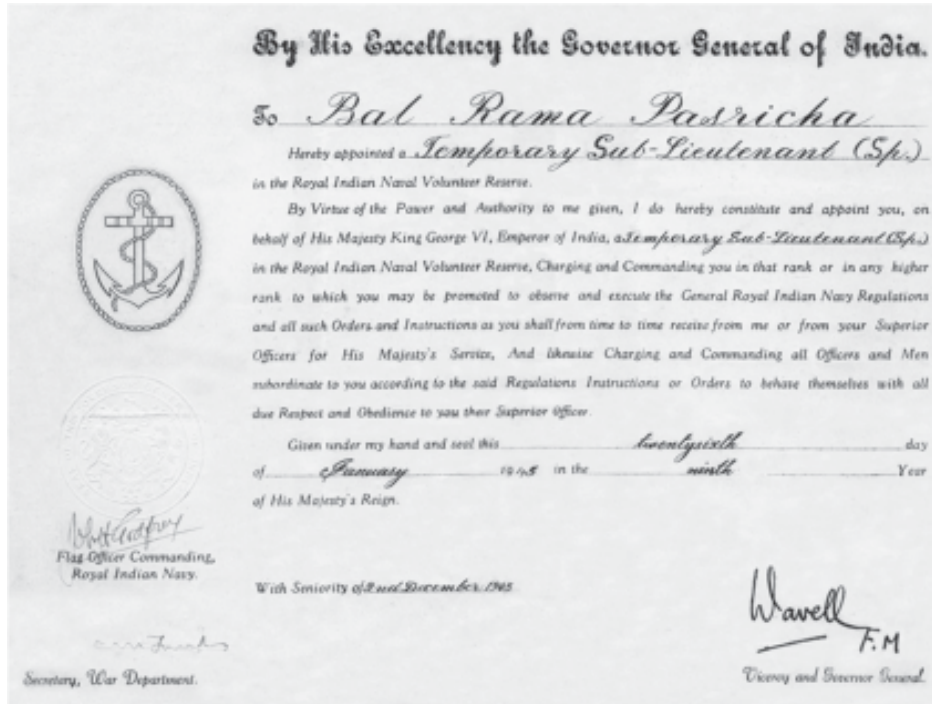
had not recruited a qualified Indian person to man Naval Stores, a Sergeant from the RN was also asked to join NHQ from Bombay. His case left a great impression on me, because of the rigidity in which CDA interpreted rules. I vividly remember my boss sending me his file, six months after this Sergeant had joined, bearing this remark:-

“We have already spent over a thousand rupees worth of officers' time, in answering CDA queries, merely to then pay this Sergeant a paltry sum of Rs 80/- as travel expenses for his travel from Bombay to New Delhi. Let us have another go and try to get justice done for this person.”

His case was duly taken up again by me, but before I could know the result, I was posted out of NHQ and transferred to the Canteen Stores Department. I was sent to Bombay to take up my appointment on board HMIS Llanstephan Castle. This ship was to carry landing craft & Royal Marines for *Burma Operations*. Since we were to sail only after three weeks, I asked my family to join me and we stayed in an apartment on Marine Lines - kindly placed at my disposal by another naval officer. As luck would have it, after I sent my family back to Lahore and our ship sailed out, its steam pipes burst and we were back - in dry dock for major repairs.

We finally sailed for Madras. By then, Rangoon had been captured and Japan had surrendered. So, our ship was utilised to bring back POWs from Rangoon to Madras. Later, our ship passed through Singapore Straits, as part of a convoy led by the Flagship of Admiral Mountbatten. The real danger then was the large number of floating mines.

We disembarked the Royal Marines at Hong Kong, from where they were taken to Japan as part of the Occupation Force. Our ship then went to Batavia\*, to pick up more POWs and we returned to Madras.



\* (Jakarta was established in the fourth century and became an important trading port for the Kingdom of Sunda. It was the de facto capital of the Dutch East Indies and was known as **Batavia**. When independence was declared in 1945, it became Jakarta and the capital of Indonesia).

Thereafter, I was posted at HMIS Circars, Vizag, as the Base Canteen Officer. Later, when I went to Bombay to be considered for a permanent commission in the Indian Navy, my case was summarily rejected. By then, the *RIN Uprising* had taken place just a month earlier and FOCRIN, Adm Godfrey Thomas declared:-

“I would rather scuttle the Navy.”

Immediately after I returned to Vizag, my release orders were received and I was struck off duty on 23 May '46 to proceed on 56 days release leave to Baramulla. Here, I was conveyed the happy news of having been selected as a Govt of India Overseas Scholar. In Sept 1946, I proceeded to London to study

at London University's Institute of Education, obtaining the Teacher's Diploma in July 1947 and the MA (Education) Degree in July 1949. After my return to India, I was to join the Ministry of Education at New Delhi. However, many refugees from Pakistan had yet to be accommodated. Thus there were no posts available for me.

Fortunately, I was soon selected by UPSC for the post of Mathematics' lecturer at Joint Services Wing. On 19 September 1949, I started my lectures at JSW (Clement Town, Dehra Dun) and then moved to National Defence Academy (Khadakwasla) in January 1956, when the Academy shifted to Poona.

Because of my being away in London from 1946 to 1949, I never came to know about the award of War Medals and Distinctions, to which I was entitled as an Emergency Commissioned Officer during WW II! Even after my return to India and serving in a military establishment this medal was never awarded, despite many attempts.

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# Victoria Falls

*Mrs Anuradha Kunte*  
(Mosi-o-Tunia)

The Falls  
Thunder in the background

In consonance  
With the churning inside my heart

Do the falls  
Never stop thundering, I had asked

Now I know as  
Nor does my heart ever stop churning things up

From my past  
My long and hoary past

Images whiz past  
As I sit in this classy Intercontinental Hotel

My Interpreter friends  
Have retired after a long & tiring day

Some young children  
White, Black & Indian blabber and laugh

And I sit  
With my pen, trying to record my feelings

As the Falls  
Thunder in the background

Requiring no explanations, no justifications  
They just thunder on.....

This poem was penned in May 1990 when the author was in Zimbabwe for a meeting of the AFRICA FUND.

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## Musical Bombay of the 60s

*Commodore Ravi Sharma (Retd)*



The other day I chanced upon a coffee table book, "Taj Mahal Foxtrot – the Story of Bombay's Jazz Age". The book covers a lot of ground - from the 30s to the 70s. But it brought back sweet memories of the 60s when the best music in Bombay was available within walking distance from the Lion Gate and young naval officers could step out any time of day or night and listen to some of the finest bands in the country.

Near Kalaghoda was a restaurant called 'La Bella' where I spent many an evening requesting the band to play one particular number they did fabulously: "All of Me". I could not listen to it often enough but strangely, I never heard any other band play that superb song!

Down Flora Fountain was Volga with the famous saxophonist Hecke Kingdom weaving a spell with 'As Time Goes By' while I savoured my favourite dish, Vegetable Petrograd, which was mouth-watering croquettes filled with butter, a full meal for Rs.3.50! Bistro was next door

with Saby Dias providing jazz and pop while one sipped coffee or tea.

Venice and The Little Hut at Churchgate were the favourite venues for jam sessions and the odd cabaret. Two beautiful ladies, Diane and Shirley Myers, held us spellbound there. Many a time one had to return disappointed as getting a table was extremely difficult unless one booked in advance or queued up early. One particular cabaret dancer whose name escapes me, perhaps mercifully, was a ravishing girl I would have liked to know better but for the fact that she was always escorted by a companion considerably bigger than me!

From Churchgate to Marine Drive, famous restaurants such as Gaylord, Berry's and Bombelli's abounded on both sides of the road featuring the top bands of Bombay. Towards the waterfront was Napoli, a smaller place which had the novelty of a jukebox so you could play all your favourite numbers if you carried a



sufficient number of 25 paise coins!

Later in the 60s came up The Talk of The Town where today stands Jazz By The Bay. I had not heard of the 'Town' till one evening my friend Aku Roy and I happened to walk by and decided to have a bite inside. We were waiting for our order when a band with a modest, conservative-looking lady in a sari took the stage. We thought we were in for some run-of-the-mill Hindi film songs but were astounded when the lady belted out 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' which would have made Gene Vincent envious! On enquiry, we were told she was Usha Iyer. Soon after, I was transferred to Cochin and was very pleasantly surprised when I bumped into her in company with my tea-planter friend, Jani Uthup, whom she had married in the meantime!!

I missed him personally but am told that a naval

sailor, Iqbal Singh, used to be a great hit in The Talk of the Town.

A top favourite band for occasions like the New Year Eve Dance and the Navy Ball was Goody Seervai's. He would have the entire crowd on the lawns of the United Services Club swinging and dancing with everyone accompanying him full-throatedly as he sang his signature tune, "Goody Goody".

Then came Blow Up at the Taj, Bombay's first disco with thundering speakers blasting away Beatles' "Ob-La Di Ob-La-Da" and Sam the Sham's "Woolly Bully". Time had indeed gone by and we had moved from candle lights and slow foxtrot to mind-blowing psychedelic radiance and the shake, rattle and roll of Rock!

The golden days had become 'Those were the days, my friend'.

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## A Naval Wife

*Courtesy Navy Foundation, Pune Charter*

**They have been through this all their life. We are proud of them. Navy wives are a Nation's pride, but the Nation fails to notice it!**

I wear no uniforms but I am in the Navy because I am his wife.  
I'm in the ranks that are rarely seen, I have no rank upon my shoulders.  
Salutes I do not give. But the military world is the place where I live.  
I'm not in the chain of command, Orders I do not get.  
But my husband is the one who does, this I cannot forget.  
I'm not the one who fires the weapon, who puts my life on the line.  
But my job is just as tough. I'm the one who's left behind.  
My husband is a patriot, a brave and prideful man.  
And the call to serve his country not all can understand.  
Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this country free.  
My husband makes the sacrifice, but so do our kids and me.  
I love the man I married. Sailing & Soldiering is his life.  
But I stand among the silent ranks known as the Naval Wife.



## An Observant Physician

*Commander Ashok Dewan (Retd)*

Establishing blood sugar levels in diabetics has moved to such a level today that it can be done without a pinprick. Reading an article on the technological advances in medicine today, I was reminded of a story my father, (Late) Surg Commodore ML Dewan, once told me.

Way back in 1937 – 38, he was the Medical Officer with the NWFP, operating in the same very harsh terrain where the Taliban has its bases today. Medical laboratories were hard to come by in that region.

To confirm his diagnosis of diabetes in the presence of huge Pathan sitting opposite him, he hit upon a simple idea. He asked the man to urinate in the same fixed spot every time,

over one week. The ‘patient’ was to note the first appearance of ants scurrying over the spot, which would confirm that his blood sugar level was elevated, and to observe if there was a feverish increase in the activity by the ants at the same ‘urinal’, as days went by.

That manifestation gave ‘Dr Sahib’ enough to go on and start treatment for diabetes. As there was no insulin those days - diet and exercise to lose weight.



Dr. Madan Lal Dewan  
M.B. and Ch. B  
(Edinburgh) July 1936

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## Playing through, on the Golf Course

*Commander Subimal Dutt (Retd)*

This happened may be four years ago at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club. I and my partner, a Civilian, had finished eight holes and decided to walk across to the 13th to continue. We saw a three ball already approaching the Tee. My friend asked the Caddy if he knew them. The Caddy replied (Caddies know everything) yes, they were some Navy blokes playing a Tournament. Determined to play through, my partner approached them saying, “Move over sailors, we have a Commander with us.” One gentleman stopped his mighty practice swings and replied politely that they both were serving Commodores and the golfer about to tee off was a Rear Admiral cleared for his next higher rank! Daunted, my partner was stepping back when the Admiral did not take his shot but came to us to know more about this exchange, recognising

me almost instantly and recalled our meeting more than 27 years ago! He then requested us to play through. Intrigued, my partner later asked me for an explanation. It goes like this- INS Betwa escorted MNS Amar (CO: Lt Cdr MS Bedi, XO: Lt Satish Soni) on her passage from Port Louis to Mumbai enroute stopped engines to enable the Crew of Amar to come on board to have a shower and Biryani lunch. My shipmate Lt Cdr Amitava Sengupta also gave them some tips on Switchboard/Starter Maintenance and trouble shooting. Even after so many years he remembered that refreshing break from the choppy seas.

After teeing off from the 14th, my partner graciously allowed Vice Admiral Satish Soni’s 3 ball to play through.

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## A Second Innings

*Mrs Nandini Guha*

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2000, my world came crashing down on me without any warning. The Almighty in His wisdom had chosen to recall to Himself, a smart, intelligent and good-looking Naval Officer at the prime of his life—my beloved husband Cdr Subroto Guha.

Subroto had taken premature retirement from the Indian Navy due to family compulsions, and had joined the Merchant Navy. Befitting his chosen career, he left this world too, while steering his ship on the high seas.

As soon as the tragic news reached Naval Headquarters, Subroto's course mates and old colleagues swung into action to extend all the help and support to me and my shattered children. Even in my dazed condition, I can recall the large numbers of Subroto's course mates across the Services gathered at the Airport, when I reached Delhi with the casket bearing his mortal remains.

Every arrangement for his funeral had been taken care of with full Naval honours. Phone calls of sympathy from all over India and abroad and visits from Naval Officers and their wives in Delhi and NCR, made sure I never felt that I was alone in my distress. Posted in Delhi, one of Subroto's ex-Divisional Officers, from his tenure as Squadron Commander at the NDA, sorted out all my paper work for pension and other financial compensations.

It is more than eleven years now and I still feel part of a large family. It is a family I can never thank enough, and I therefore make it a point to remain connected in every way possible. I took membership of the Navy Foundation and Kota House for this purpose. So apart from the Annual NWWA meetings, which I really look

forward to, I enjoy attending all functions held by NFDC or Kota House.

At the tenth year Memorial the children organised for their father, all Subroto's Naval and Forces friends joined to pay tribute to him. His cadets at the NDA, mid-shipmen he trained on INS Tir, his course mates, his colleagues from different postings like the Cabinet Secretariat, all spoke in glowing terms about the friend and mentor that they missed even today.

My children have always told me, that my eyes twinkle whenever I spot a naval uniform. They are not wrong. I can't help but feel very safe and comfortable in their vicinity. I am a big fan of the Naval Band, and one of my dreams came true when they played for us at my son's wedding reception. I am thrilled when I get an invitation to the Annual performance of the Naval Symphonic Orchestra.

Today, with the strength and support given to me by my Naval family I have been able to undertake all the responsibilities left on my shoulders by the Almighty. I am teaching at Delhi University, my children are today independent and well-settled. I was able to care for my bed-ridden mother-in-law for five long years, till she joined Subroto, her only son.

I do not wear a naval uniform, yet never have I been made to feel that this uniform has left my side. Today in my second innings, when I see my little grandson wearing his grandfather's peak cap and telling his school-mates all about the Indian Navy, I am overwhelmed with pride, nostalgia and a sense of belonging to a family that cares. It is a privilege that I will always cherish.

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# No Blame Game

Commander V.K. Mohan (Retd)

We mostly tend to blame others for our setbacks and failures. While doing so, we judge the other person without realizing that our judgment may not always be correct. Such situations are quite common due to changes in moods of people every now and then. The changes could be in the family, friends' circle or at work place, where the people with different temperaments have to perform together.

Despite such challenges, we wish to progress in career through promotions which mostly lead to higher standard of living. However, even after that, some of us start experiencing more tension than happiness, Hence, this calls for change in perspective by keeping in view the following salient points:-

- a) Competition against ourselves, instead of others.
- b) Increase in options.
- c) Decrease in needs.
- c) Tolerance and empathy for others.

It is experienced that by competing against others, we limit our options. For instance, the serving personnel aim to do better than others in their branch and rank, so as to get selective promotions. However, by continuous hard work and more professional knowledge followed by improvement in past performance, the promotions would become one of the options. The other alternative could be resettlement in civil life after retirement at optimum age, if and when required. By doing so, the tension would decrease followed by increase in standard of living as also the quality of life in respect of all

concerned. Never the less, that would require discrimination for maintaining a balance between standard of living and quality of life.

Having broadened our outlook through the aforesaid approach, we would tend to have tolerance and empathy for others followed by control over our needs. In this context, it may be mentioned that apart from possession of comfort and luxury items, the needs also include respect and recognition from others. However, through tolerance and empathy, when we try to keep on uplifting others, the respect and recognition follow automatically.

The policy of competing against one's own self is equally important for children. Therefore, they must be encouraged to continue working hard, happily, while keeping their options open for various streams i.e. science, arts and commerce. It is experienced that a happy person is always successful where as a successful person may not always be happy.

Happy persons never indulge in blame game for their problems but instead they accept responsibility for them. By doing so, they gradually become adept in solving them thereby gaining more knowledge and experience. That is why they are always successful in life. Even where they face failures, they never get upset but consider those a stepping stone towards success. The following two lines maybe relevant in this case-

*THE SETBACKS ARE PART OF LIFE  
HOW YOU HANDLE THEM IS ART OF LIFE.*

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## Gunners too are Human

Commodore RPS Ravi (Retd)

People keep telling me to publish my works: the funny stuff, the stories, poems et al. If ever I do, the one inexhaustible subject that I have is that of 'Gunners'. In exclusivity, peculiarity, uniqueness and sheer entertainment there is nothing and no one to beat the bang-bang people – the Gunners; they are simply the top guns in the Navy and have always been. I am not even sixty yet and want to live happily for a few more years, at least; hence, no names. I am making it difficult for you, as difficult as Santa who was asked by Banta, "If you can guess what is in this basket, I shall give you some of the eggs. And, if you can tell me how many, I shall give you the entire dozen."

The first Gunner that comes to my mind was our Gunnery Instructor in the Naval Academy. He was an inexplicable miracle of God; after he was completely moulded in God's workshop, God had a twinkle in his eyes when He decided to send him (the GI) on earth without a heart. His parents didn't know about it, his relatives didn't have an inkling; but, from the time we interacted with him, we knew of his

physiological handicap. Looking back, I marvel at the clairvoyance of God; He would have known that even if he had given GI HS (this is as close as I get to giving away his name) a heart, HS would have had no use for it.



HS had a very limited vocabulary; he had no use for long speeches and fancy words. Even the short ones that he was endowed with were hardly used. And yet, we understood him well. For example, whilst marching in the scary (scarier than a mine-field, at least) parade ground of the old Gunnery School, when he shouted at us through clenched t e e t h , "Peeeeeeeeee...", none of us ever mistook it as a directive to wet our pants; we knew, like anyone familiar with the Gunnery commands, that HS

wanted us to 'Press our heels' whilst marching.

"Patenshuncats" was clearly (clarity is what a Gunner demands on either end) understood by us as "Pay attention Cadets."

On that day, a fateful day for one of my ilk, after several rounds of 'warming up' drills around the



parade ground, we settled on one end of the ground to learn about the correct way to put on our drill boots. HS finished with his “*atiiiizz*” command and had embarked on “*patenshuncats*”.

Gunners, unlike personnel of the other branches, like simplicity; no far-fetched cerebral ideas of the other side of the universe for them. They have their feet firmly planted on the ground. And, how do they achieve it? Simple, by their heavy boots; anything less than 20 pounds each isn’t acceptable. Putting on boots correctly for them, therefore, has as much import, as say a certain Armstrong fulfilling Kennedy’s dream of an American landing on the Moon. And whilst Neil had gently lowered the Lunar Module on a strange surface, HS insisted that everything in the world had to be done with show of force and by the number (“*Ginati se*”). In our moments of sanity – brief though they were during the training period – we had often wondered, with our tongues firmly inside our hollowed cheeks, if HS, at his home, would have wanted Mrs HS to do ‘everything’ *ginati se*.

After his instructions that lasted all of ten minutes (since ‘important’ parts had to be repeated), he had come to the part wherein he was now telling us how to tie the laces. After tying the half knot, both ends had to be put together and had to go around the upper part of the boots twice and that would leave only the stubbed portion that had to be smartly tucked in.

After HS’s demo, we were to assimilate the newly acquired knowledge by practically applying it to our own boots. Cadet RK (no names, as I said) did it all correctly, as he erroneously thought and was far ahead of the

rest of the class. Once round the boot, he happily whispered to himself and now for the second round, he nearly sang it. But, to his utter horror he found that he had more than the stubs left.

Wisdom that gradually descends on all mortals who have to deal with Gunners, had not yet dawned on Cadet RK and he called out to HS, rather unwisely, as to what to do with two inches or so of the extra lace that he had landed up with.

Gunnery Instructor HS’s face exploded with unconcealed mirth at the god sent chance of helping out Cadet RK in his ‘*genuine*’ concern at being left with two inches of lace.

“*Gookane*” screamed GI HS, acknowledging that it was indeed a ‘Good Question’.

Quarterdeck policy doesn’t permit me to give details of how HS replied to RK. The mildest of his explanations was to ‘*broaden*’ RK’s outlook towards life in general and Gunnery Instructors in particular by going around the parade ground five times with a rifle held high over both arms and shouting as to what to do with two inches of extra lace.

At the end of about 45 minutes of this *detailed explanation*, when RK had started weighing considerably less than the weight of his boots, HS ‘*affectionately*’ asked RK, “*Enmodouse*”. RK had decided, long time back, that he won’t have any-more-doubts for the rest of his naval career.

By the way, in answer to Banta’s riddle in the beginning of this post, Santa asked, “*Thoda hint to de*” (Give a little hint, at least). Both of them would have made excellent Gunners.

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## Life As a Veteran - Contribution to Society

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Commander S Mohan (Retd)

In my new 'avatar' as a civilian, I have been a 'rag-picker of sorts', a kabadi-wallah, who picks up souls from life's dump heap... the discards... the fellows on whom society had almost given up; in fact, the fellows had almost given up on themselves. By the grace of God, I have managed to not only rescue them but infuse them with healthy self-esteem and a joie-de-vivre not often seen in this world.

When I scan my horizon over the last three decades, a few salient stories stand out. There were two Lieutenant Commanders who were incorrigibly addicted to alcohol. One was found drunk on watch at sea, and was promptly transferred ashore to INS ANGRE. He was caught drunk again whilst on duty in this shore base as the Officer of the Day, and was hospitalized in naval hospital INHSASVINI. The other officer, in his alcoholic withdrawals and *delirious tremens*, had bitten off a piece of his tongue. The Chief Psychiatrist of the naval hospital had tried to cure them of alcoholism, by administering electric shocks to their brains—with no success.

By sheer chance, (or was it by Providence?) I happened to bump into the Chief Psychiatrist in 1985; I disclosed how I had found a new and sober way of living for the last three years. The good doctor pleaded with me to try and bring his two officers around. Soon both came into the new way of living sober. Unfortunately, despite achieving sobriety, the sins of his past caught up with the drunken OOW, and he was discharged from service when he was sober for about six months. He joined the merchant Navy, sailed the seas as a Master mariner, and now has a robust self-esteem; he has been totally sober for over 27 years!

I am grateful to be an instrument in his recovery.

The other officer sobered up, but I lost track of him after his retirement.

In 1989 I came across a dirty, disheveled, drunken woman in the psychiatric ward of Lady Harding Hospital, Delhi. Her father, a Colonel who was awarded the Vir-Chakra, and her brother, a serving Colonel, would not even touch her with a barge pole! She was so thin, emaciated, and uncared that even the ward-sisters ill-treated her. With my patience and persistent efforts, she sobered up in a few months. She got spruced, got a job in a multi-national company, started travelling overseas on work. She now wore only French chiffons and georgette sarees! She remained completely sober for about nine years, but sad to say, she ceased to follow the spiritual principles that she had learnt; she slighted me imperiously when I reminded her of our spiritual program. One day I got a call from her distraught and heart-broken father; he sobbed to me that after a nine-day drinking binge, she was found dead on the toilet seat. I felt utterly powerless that I could not be of help.

One day I received a letter from a lady in Chandigarh asking my help; I was posted in Delhi. I had never been to Chandigarh before, but I found my way to her house. The lady was distracted, as her two small sons were constantly hanging around her ankles, while her husband was flaked out on the floor. He was so drunk that even a vigorous shake-up could not wake him up! I gave her some literature for her husband to read, and asked to be called when he is sober enough. I was shocked to learn that he was a jet pilot of the IAF, a fellow



cadet-entry officer who not only flew jets but was part of the 'Thunder Bolts' aerobatics team where he flew planes wing-tip to wing-tip with other jets! He was an excellent pilot, no doubt, but he needed shots of neat Whisky at 4 am before he started flying! One morning he was flying high up in the sky in his single-seater jet plane. Whilst flying high above the skies, he began hallucinating: he imagined that he had a co-pilot sitting beside him, to whom he handed over all controls! He had no idea how long the plane flew thus, but when he suddenly came to his senses he thanked his lucky stars that there was sufficient height for him to pilot the plane back safely to the ground. He was sweating profusely: he was shaking from alcoholic withdrawals. This incident convinced him incontrovertibly that he had lost control over his drinking now. I was horrified hearing his story.

Soon we got him transferred to Delhi, and he sobered up. He got a plum appointment as a Staff Officer to an Air Marshal; soon he managed to retire from the Air Force. By God's grace, he has been totally sober for over 21 years now. The family migrated to USA, both his sons are now happily married: the family makes a yearly trip to Delhi to meet other fellow-alcoholics in Delhi and Chandigarh –in gratitude, to replicate what someone did to them.

One day over six years ago, I got a call from a complete stranger, asking for help. I went over to his house. His aged parents were totally distracted, his wife had filed for divorce, and he had credit card debts of about **Seven Lakhs**, spent on alcohol. It was a miracle that his company had not discharged him. I took him in my fold, and from Day 1 he has been sober! Exactly on his first sober 'birthday' was a new daughter born; he paid off all his debts by that first year, and has been promoted

quickly to the position of Vice President in his company. I repeatedly reassure his parents that I am not God; I am just an alcoholic, trying to replicate what someone did to me!

I had gone to Kerala in September 2012, where I met a total stranger –a man addicted to smoking. I spent a few hours with him, and returned to Delhi. From that day, he has not smoked a cigarette. What is this miracle? Am I in possession of some divine powers? I have no such delusions, and hope I do not sound supercilious. I am not God, but I can be a channel of this Higher Power; just as the electric cable conducting electricity from the generator is not the Source of power, but it can be a channel of electric power.

With gratitude, I must recount my own case of how I met a Colonel of the Indian Army in 1982 who instantly changed my life. Eighteen years of drinking had made it crystal clear to me that it had taken a toll on my career and my relationships. [My Commanding Officers described me as "A good officer, but who drinks a drop too much!"] The magic happened when that Colonel shared his story; from that very day, I have not touched a drop — over 31 years now, One Day at a Time. Today I dance at parties, volunteer to be the Master-of-ceremonies, and have an unusual zest for living... without a drink!

I sincerely hope these stories are not in bad taste.

Why do I go to help others?

Well, someone did it for me... and gratefully I pass it on. Alcoholism is a disease that strikes young and old. Till date, alcoholism has no medical cure; yet it can be arrested, One Day at a Time.

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## Willow on the Waves

Commodore Saleem M Anwer

### ***An episode about the men in whites and their love for the game of cricket***

Lord Wellington (who studied at Eton College, Buckinghamshire, England from 1781 to 1784), after his victory over Napoleon in 1815, reportedly remarked “The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton”. Another historian records that many years later, while passing an Eton cricket game, Wellington remarked “There grows the stuff that won Waterloo”. Obviously Wellington was referring to qualities of leadership and *esprit de corps*, which cricket inculcated in the future military leaders of that era.

The passage of time, rapid evolution of the nature of this game, even the many controversies it has been embroiled in, have hardly diminished the passion with which modern day militarymen follow and pursue cricket. The navies, in particular, have consistently deployed it as yet another effective tool to promote camaraderie amongst its ranks and foster stronger bonds with their overseas counterparts, never missing a chance to engage one another in a friendly cricket match and washing down the scores with a pint of their favourite lager. Irrefutably, the game of cricket has contributed much more than doling out humdrum entertainment on a lazy afternoon.

It was in April 2011 that I found myself an unsuspecting witness to the power that the game wields and the passion that it generates, especially in the Indian context. We were out sailing for a prolonged overseas deployment to the South China Sea and the North West Pacific. Five ships in company, having just completed a joint exercise with the Republic of Singapore Navy and having overcome some really challenging conditions in the South China Sea, were on a serene passage to our next rendezvous. I took this opportunity to catch up

on my reading, turning to the stack of magazines invariably stocked up prior any such deployment.

It was World Cup 2011 all the way. The articles comprised an unending compendium of cricket statistics, players’ profiles, venue description, match schedule, speculation on the next champions, you name it. Somewhere down the line, my mind drifted to memories of another time when such hysteria was generated – and with much reason. It was an image indelibly etched in the minds of most Indians. Underdog Indians pitted against the mighty and much-feared West Indies, à la David vs Goliath. The bespectacled hulk, Clive Lloyd, the gum-chewing hard-hitter Viv Richards, the menacing paceman Malcolm Marshall – it was a long and pretty intimidating line-up. Of course, *Kapil’s Devils* were no minnows, with veterans such as Gavaskar, Srikanth, Patil, Amarnath, Kirmani, Madan Lal *et al* forming very formidable lines of attack and defence. What followed was sheer magic, forcing many *pundits* of cricketing fraternity to eat their words. The world was – to put it simply – bowled over! And when finally, the magical moment arrived and a beaming Kapil Dev held *the Cup aloft* in the pavilions of Lord’s, the *Mecca* of Cricket, one could only fantasize of an encore. That was 1983.

And then, there was Saturday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2011.

At Mumbai’s Wankhede Stadium, just four runs away from another historic win in the World Cup 2011, with 11 balls and 06 wickets in hand, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the Indian skipper squinted against the arc lights as the Sri Lankan bowler charged in. Nuwan Kulasekara’s redemption lay in his endeavour to bowl the



Indian side out, since the run-to-ball equation was already skewed in favour of the hosts. He bowled a full delivery.

Refusing to play the perfect host, Dhoni stepped out and heaved the bat (the much-touted 'helicopter shot'?). An entire nation rose to its feet as the ball took the aerial route, accelerating through long-on for the maximum. SIX!

The collective cheer that ran through the nation rumbled as far East as the South China Sea and echoed across the Philippine Basin, relayed by five of its emissaries on an overseas deployment. The Indian warships, though out of range of conventional forms of media coverage, had followed the proceedings ardently through updates on the internet (thank God for modern day technology!). Every Sri Lankan wicket had been cheered and every Indian run celebrated, notwithstanding the fact that it was an unearthly hour (past 2 am in the morning, being 3½ hours ahead of IST) and being busy preparing for an early morning rendezvous with ships of the 7<sup>th</sup> Carrier Strike Group of the United States Navy for commencement of a Bilateral Exercise MALABAR.

The Indian warships came alive, the rigours of late night and early morning watches forgotten, with people congratulating each other as if everyone had a personal stake in it. As I entered the bridge that morning, I noticed a Cheshire Cat smile on virtually everyone's face, the shoulders square and heads held high. Never underestimate the power of the willow, I thought happily, not in the subcontinent at least.

Later in the day, the ship's crew assembled for a *Barakhana* (a celebratory lunch, no less), organised by an enthusiastic logistics team, to mark the 'momentous' occasion. Members of the crew dreamily recalled where they were and what they were doing – those who were around

then, that is - the last time India lifted the coveted cup of joy, all those 28 years back!

Back home, we were certain, the celebrations would be far more lavish and the analysis endless – not constrained by time or space. From swanky clubs to TV channel studios to your neighbourhood *chaiwallah* stalls – all abuzz with opinions and reviews of *the* event. Of course, it had not all been smooth sailing for the *men in blues*, as they had faltered and stumbled in the early stages of the contest, creating doubts in the minds of many enroute. But they did recover – and how!

Co-hosting the event with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh had been a challenge by itself, not the least of which was crowd management and elaborate security arrangements. The progress of the Indian team to each higher level had generated greater euphoria and heightened sense of anticipation. On an invitation by the Prime Minister of India, his Pakistani counterpart had joined him to witness the traditional rivals battle it out during the electrifying semi-final match at Mohali. The moment of truth - the final tussle between India and Sri Lanka - was witnessed by no less than the Presidents of both the countries, apart from a humungous sea of humanity comprising political leaders, celebrities and the *aam aadmi*. All consumed by a common passion for the game.

As we traversed the seas for the next leg of our mission, smug in the knowledge of having 'done it' and wondering if yet another encore in 2015 was too much to ask for, the final sentiments cruised through my mind in the form of a limerick

'Twas a pitched mother-of-all-battles todate  
With the crowds thronging Wankhede gate  
But it went by the book, As India donned a look  
Of a nation united by the required run rate!

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# Indomitable Admiral RL Pereira

*Lieutenant Commander Deepak Sikand (Retd)*

I have only watched Admiral Ronald Llynsdale Pereira, PVSM, AVSM, ADC from the sidelines when he was the Chief of the Naval Staff and I, a mere Lieutenant.

Ronnie, as he was fondly referred to, and Phyllis Pereira did not have any children. The entire Navy was their family. We, the young officers and sailors were their children. Almost anyone who came in contact with this wonderful couple would have his own story to tell. The Admiral is no longer with us and Phyllis is lodged in an old age home. She is suffering from Dementia. However, her eyes light up whenever she sees someone in uniform, any uniform. I understand a grateful Indian Navy regularly sends her chocolates and flowers - two of her favourite things.

Those who were a few courses junior to me have their own stories to tell of the Pereiras when he was the Deputy Commandant at the NDA. My first recollection of him was when he was inspecting Divisions at the Old Gunnery School Parade ground at INS Venduruthy. While inspecting the Guard of honour, he touched the tied up Patka of a Sikh Sailor and shook the Ball of tied up hair as he asked "Gutti Hai?" It was common in those days for some Sikh sailors to keep medium long hair and proceed on shore leave without Patka or Pugri. The Modified appearance was not acceptable and hence the Admiral's insistence on the Gutti. Respect of the Admiral was such that no one felt his religious sentiments could have even been remotely hurt.

I remember once the Admiral went on a surprise inspection of the Command Mess on a hot day. An Officer who must have been on a night duty was sprawled on a mat in an unshaven condition and in his vest and Boxer shorts. The cabin was in a shabby condition. Mistaking him for a Civilian Bearer, the Admiral asked "Tumhara

Sahib Kahan hai?" The flabbergasted officer was totally flustered for an answer!

Later, I was posted as ADSA at the now defunct Directorate of Submarine Arm at NHQ. A PSOs presentation on submarines was on in the Admiral's Office. I was sitting with the Staff Officer in the out office with files and documents should any of these were to be asked for. The Staff Officer received a call from a Member of Parliament asking to speak to the Admiral. The Staff Officer informed him that the Admiral was busy at a meeting. After a while, the MP called again and got the same answer. The MP then threatened to come personally to the Admiral's Office. When informed of this, the Admiral not wanting to disturb the PSOs personally came to the Staff Officers Office to receive the call. The MP informed him that Sea I, XYZ had been transferred to Chilka. He wanted the Admiral to cancel the transfer of this sailor. The Admiral politely told him that we have to live with transfers in the Naval Service. The MP then took the stand that the sailor had very old parents and, therefore, he should not be transferred. The Admiral then said, "My father is 92 years old and he lives alone in Bangalore all while I am posted here in New Delhi". No amount of arguing by the MP could move the Admiral. He firmly and politely stuck to his stand. True to his nature, no action was contemplated against the ignorant sailor for his frivolous "Sifarish".

I heard the following story from his Flags, I think. The Admiral was on his morning walk one winter. He saw a beggar shivering on the pavement. The Admiral immediately retraced his steps. He went back to the Navy House, brought a blanket and covered the poor fellow. Since the blanket was Naval Issue, the Flags had no option but to have a payment order filled out on behalf of the



Admiral. The Admiral would not have it otherwise. We all know how he would insist on his Mess Bills to be paid in full wherever he went.

Though terrorism had not raised its ugly head in those days, his staff wanted him to go for his Golf in the Official Car. He would refuse and travel in his "Standard 10" stating that it was on a private trip he was proceeding on. I wonder if a staff car / jeep with the Naval Police followed him; just in case.

In later years, after his retirement, the Admiral would come to Tata Institute for therapy for the cancer he had developed. On one occasion I was staying in the WNC Mess when he came for his treatment. The Navy insisted

on providing a staff car to ferry him to and from the airport. Once when he had left for the airport on his return journey to Bangalore, the Mess Secretary was informed that one his shirts were left behind. The Admiral had just 3 shirts. Now he would be left with only two! The Mess Secretary rushed another staff car to the airport with this shirt to be delivered to him before his flight took off.

There may be several anecdotes about this outstanding Admiral who was always surprised whenever promoted to a higher Rank during his upward journey in Service until he found himself at the pinnacle.

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## Goa Nostalgia

*Ms Anjali Majumdar*

A **24 year** old mother of two Sons, and a babe in arms, his brother not yet 18 months; two untrained young Tamilian girls who spoke no other language; sundry bits and pieces of luggage, a refrigerator and an old scooter. That is what my husband had to escort from Hansa, Coimbatore, to Hansa, Vasco Da Gama, in May 1964 — a nightmare of the Journey by rail over three nights which I would not wish on my worst enemy.

The silver lining as dawn broke over Vasco was a flat ready to walk into for the first and only time in my ten years as a naval wife. The ready availability of LPG added to the bliss; and for those who craved Coca Cola this was delivered to the door; and the baker, Padaria Soza was just down the hill. And fish in plenty in the market.

But nary a sign of mutton in all our eighteen months; no eggs either till we discovered the poultry farm at Verna run by Valladares. Then Commander Pran Prashar came as a saviour for the wives: a poultry farm, a steam laundry and a weekly vegetable run to Belgaum which

on a rare occasion brought in some apples. Foreign milk powder, cream by Nestle and yes our very own Amul milk powder for our elder son, the younger one breast fed.

The officers and wives in the Chowgule flats were in two camps- Hansa's and Gomantak's. Thus Damyanti Parashar, the mother of three sons, gave me some invaluable advice on the bringing up of my two sons.

Before I knew it, there came another journey: by sea to Mangalore, Woodlands Hotel for the day there and the night train to Cochin, a land of plenty; and there bliss, there was a branch of Spencer's which meant meat pies from Madras, and sausages, ham and bacon as well; and for the boys many books which were handed down to their children years later.

There were more horrendous journeys to report till we left the naval families in 1972.

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## Marshal's Story

*Commodore Lalit Kapur (Retd)*

We were at the Staff College in Wellington, part of one of the best teams the Naval Wing at DSSC has seen. The CI (Army), Maj Gen KM Seth and Mrs Seth had come home to share experiences about our dogs—both had acquired Labrador Retriever pups from the litter of Leony, belonging to then Col PKS. Gen Seth asked why I had named my dog “Marshal”. The opportunity was too delicious to resist, so I replied, “Sir, it’s always been my dream to have three dogs, named after the senior-most ranks of each Service. At least I now have the opportunity of saying, ‘Marshal, come here’ and having someone respond. The other two will follow”.

Gen Seth took it in his stride. His immediate response was, “OK, from today, my dog’s name is Admiral”. He wasn’t one to forget. A few days later, we were exchanging pleasantries in his garden following our evening walk when suddenly he yelled, “Admiral, come here”. As if in response, the CI (Navy), who was taking his evening constitutional, walked into Gen Seth’s drive.



“You can’t yell out like that, Krish, after all I’m senior to you”, said the CI (Navy). Gen Seth was equal to the occasion. “But I wasn’t calling you, I was calling my dog”, he said. “You can’t call your dog Admiral”, expostulated the CI (Navy). Gen Seth responded, “If Lalit can call his dog Marshal, why can’t I call my dog Admiral”. So the next day I was in the CI (Navy)’s office, explaining to him why my dog had been named ‘Marshal’.

About a year later, I was transferred to Mumbai and we were allotted a house in Harbour Heights. Marshal was by now full grown, very

mischievous, very friendly and playful. One person who he developed a penchant for annoying was Mrs G....., wife of retired Air Marshal G..... Mrs G... was fond of dogs who knew their place. Marshal was fond of mischief!

Sharon and Alan came calling one evening. On seeing Marshal, Sharon asked if she could take him to show her Aunt. I didn’t think to inquire who the Aunt was and promptly said yes. So Sharon put Marshal on leash and got into the lift, while Alan came inside.

She was back barely moments later, trying very hard to repress her laughter. It seems that when her Aunt opened the door, she and Marshal promptly recognised each other. Mrs G... promptly berated Sharon for bringing this uncouth dog to her house. In response Marshal, in his inimitable style, cocked up his leg on her front door and marked out his territory!

A few weeks later, we went calling on another friend in Ahilya. This couple was very fond of Marshal, so he had to come along. Ayesha, the daughter, was playing in the open space in front of Ahilya and asked if Marshal could stay with her, so of course I said yes. We had barely moved into the house when Ayesha came in and said, “I’m not talking to your dog. He thinks my best friend is a lamp post”. The situation was saved by a loud guffaw from our host and hostess, with Ayesha also joining in.

Marshal was to give us many more memories and much happiness before being taken away before his time, but that is another story.

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## KD – An Admirable Admiral

*Commodore SM Sundaram (Retd)*

In 1964 on completion of my sea tenure on board INS Kistna, I was transferred to INS Hamla. In INS Hamla I had the unique privilege of working under Captain Krishan Dev, affectionately called KD (later on Rear Admiral Krishan Dev) as secretary (nowadays called Staff Officer). To work as Secretary to the Commanding Officer of the Supply and Secretariat School, INS Hamla is a post which every young Logistics Officer would vie for. I consider that posting as the best in my service career, not only because it was a posting to my Alma Mater, but to have served under Captain Krishan Dev who, to my mind, is one of the finest Officer Navy has ever produced.

I was very young and raw. Not groomed in the portals of NDA (I am a direct entry officer) my service etiquette was poor. I was a square peg in a round hole. It was Captain Krishan Dev, with his kid glove touch, moulded me to comfortably settle down in the service environment.

Captain Krishan Dev had great qualities. I never saw him losing his temper, which is a rare quality in a human being. He was very hard working and extremely service minded. He never chided anyone in public but always showered praises, for good work done, in public. If any officer committed mistakes nay blunder, he never scolded them but would correct them with immense patience. He was always polite to everyone.

There was only one staff car at that time in INS Hamla (good old Ambassador) which was Captain's car. If any officer had to go to Headquarters, in Colaba, Bombay, on duty, he would part with his car. He would walk home for lunch and if the car did not return before closing hours, he would walk to Captain's bungalow with files tucked under his arm. He never used his Cox'n for carrying the files unless they were heavy.



He treated me as a part of his family. Mrs Krishan Dev was equally nice to me and my wife. For every party he had in his house, we were invited. I told him once that as he had so many guests in each party, we could be left out. His answer was that will I leave out my children?

On working days at 11 a.m. all officers used to assemble in the conference room situated on the first floor of the Administrative building for tea break. He usually went on rounds of the

establishment at about 10 a.m. and joined the officers for a cup of tea in the conference room at 11 a.m. and interacted with all officers to get to know what was happening in the establishment.

While in service the Admiral was seconded to the Garden Reach Workshop as CMD. He rechristened it as Garden Reach Ship Builders



& Engineers (GRSE). In a place like Kolkata, he managed the workforce with great skill and human touch. He managed GRSE extremely well. Impressed with his performance in GRSE, the Government appointed him as CMD of the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI). Here again he exhibited his administrative acumen and turned SCI from red to black. On retirement from SCI, he joined a private company for a while and thereafter settled down in Vasant Vihar in New Delhi

His affection for us continued even after his retirement. His son got married at New Delhi. He called me personally and invited us for the

reception. Due to a slip up, I missed the reception. Next morning I got a call from the Admiral as to why I did not come for the Reception. I felt sheepish and ashamed. I went to his house and apologized for the slip up. He told me such things do happen and asked me to keep in touch with him, which I did.

Both my wife and I were deeply saddened when we heard of his passing away. Rarely one comes across an individual with such unique qualities of head and heart. He was indeed, an Admirable Admiral.

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## Fond Memories of My First Innings

*Commander Malay Das (Retd)*

My Alma-mater (NDA) and the Indian Navy has given me everything that I hold dear in my life. What I am today is because of the discipline and training I received during my informative years. During my 20 years in the Indian Navy I have served under many Commanding Officers but it is only one Commanding Officer that I still remember and revere.

During his tenure in the Navy he was a known terror and had the audacity to paint a big “L” when he took over command of BETWA. No junior wanted to serve in the ship or establishment where he was in command.

I am talking of the one and only Real Admiral Keki Pestonji. I had known him since my Midshipman days because of Yachting. We were both fairly good sailors and have taken part in 10 National Enterprise Regattas.

I had the privilege to serve under him for the first time in Naval Academy where I was posted as a Divisional Officer. My colleagues at that

time, Lt. Kanwara/Lt. Sequira/ Lt. Chavanawar will surely bear me out on our experience of serving with one of the finest officers the Navy has ever seen.

I joined the Naval Academy in Kochi after my sea time on INS Cauvery end 1976. It was then commanded by Commander Gupta. Everyday I and all my other colleagues would come in the morning at 0800 hrs and pack up by 1400 hrs. It was a lovely routine and daily life was running along quite smoothly.

About three months into our tenure we came to know of the change in command and who else but Commander Keki Pestonji will be taking over. He took over on a Monday and till Friday nothing had changed in our routine. We all thought perhaps he had mellowed down. Then on Saturday at 1200 hrs his Coxswain comes to all of us with a notice calling for a meeting at 1300 hrs. The drama had just begun!

When we entered his office there were 15 odd



chairs placed in a semi circle with our names marked on each chair and in order of seniority.

Commander Keki Pestonji began his meeting telling us that the meeting will take only 30 minutes but it lasted full 5 hrs without lunch or water to drink and only one person was doing the talking. From Lt. Cdr. Karnik who was the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command to the junior most civilian English teacher he blasted us all. He had a black note book in front of him where he had recorded all our activities from day one. None of us could contradict him.

At the end of the meeting Cdr Keki Pestonji said that the routine changes now and the new routine especially for four of us who were Divisional Officers was from 0530 hrs to 2230 hrs with at least one Divisional Officer being present for all activities where the cadets are involved. Twice a week after dinner debates and extempore speeches were held where the entire training team had to be present and debriefing done at the end of the speech.

I will now dwell with a few instances that took place between Cdr. Keki Pestonji and I. These small incidences made me realize what leadership is all about and what a great leader Keki Pestonji was.

*First incident* took place when I was given a love letter by Vice Admiral Barboza. The incident had taken place on INS Cauvery mess account when a cheque for Rs. 200/- issued by one Commanding Officer had bounced and no Mess Secretary had the courage to tell the Commanding Officer that his cheque had bounced. Cash in Bank was not tallied during various audits and during my first audit I could not tally the Bank statement. I brought this to the notice of my Commanding Officer who initiated an in-house audit. Since the in-house audit could not detect the matter was reported to C-in-C who advised an outside audit where

it was found that in 1972 a cheque was issued which had bounced.

*My Love Letter* was for not taking over the Mess Account properly from the previous officer who also rose to the rank of Rear Admiral.

When Commander Keki Pestonji heard me out and realized that I had not committed any mistake he asked me to put up a representation which I refused, I then told him that since the love letter will remain in my dossier for six months and I was expecting my Long Course could he hold on to it for some time.

With that I left his office after signing the document. For the next 45 days Cdr. K Pestonji kept that love letter in his desk along with three reminders from C-in-C. When our batch long course list came out he called me to his office and asked me if he could send the Love Letter now!!

I don't think that any other Commanding Officer would have this kind of guts and would back his officer.

### **Annual Inspection of Naval Academy**

All of us in the Navy have faced umpteen Annual Inspections. The one inspection that is still fresh in my memory in the one I faced in 1977 under the command of none other Commander Keki Pestonji.

When the inspection dates were announced he called for a meeting of all officers and stated that all work will go on as normal. (As it is our normal timing was 0530 hrs to 2230 hrs). No cadets to be utilized for any work. In other words no routine is to be disturbed. Before the inspection date Cdr. Keki Pestonji applied for one month leave. On receiving the leave application Commodore Krishna Subramanian who was the Chief of Staff in Kochi rang up Cdr. Keki Pestonji. I happened to be in Cdr.



Pestonji's office when COS rang up. The conversation went on like this:

**COS:** Keki you have applied for leave?

**Keki:** Yes sir, it is as per forecast.

**COS:** But your Academy is being inspected.

**Keki:** Yes sir, the inspection will go on. My 2<sup>nd</sup> in command is competent to handle the inspection.

How many Commanding Officers, does any esteemed reader know where the CO has gone on leave during inspection. The Academy was inspected and Admiral Barboza ordered a re-inspection.

Now the re-inspection was some time in Oct/Nov when Goa was holding the international Yachting Regatta. That year I had come second in the Navy Championship and Keki Pesponji had come third.

On the day he came back from leave I went to his office and told him that I am definitely going for the regatta. His answer was "What's stopping you!" I said the re-inspection. He looked at me up and down and said you can go for the regatta and he would also do the same. We both went for the Regatta and the Academy was re-inspected again in December.

### **Dining out**

During our tenure in Naval Academy, Lt. Chavanawar was being dined out. Cdr Pestonji informed that he would organize the dining out and subsequent dining out other officers will be nominated. He wanted to set a standard and we would have to keep that as minimum standard. Till to-date my wife and I think that was the best dining out that an officer was ever given and believe me, Lt Chavanawar was no favourite of Keki Pestonji.

I still remember that he always said that take care of the small things in life and the big things will take care of itself.

### **Another Spat**

This was 1979 nationals and in the Navy championship I had come sixth. For the Regatta the Navy had 12 Musto and Hyde foreign sails. For reason not known to me, the then Secretary Naval Sailing Club, Mumbai declared that only top 5 would sail with foreign sails and that I would have to sail with an Indian sail. My request had no effect on the Secretary However, I have always had my way if I thought that I was right.

One day before the Regatta at night I stole a Musto and Hyde sail and kept it in my locker in the sailing club. Two hours before the Regatta I took my boat as far as possible from the secretary's eyes and hoisted the Musto and Hyde sail. The moment it went up the Secretary gave me shout and called me. Cdr. Pestonji, Cdr. Mongia and the Secretary were sitting on the stairs of the sailing club. I went up to the Secretary and he ordered me to take down the sail and hoist an Indian sail. I refused his order. Then the Secretary said, Lt M Dass I hereby order you to take the sail down.

Cdr. Keki Pestonji realized that I was about to give in, when he put his head back and shook it. The moment I had his support I told the Secretary that he can do whatever he pleases but I will not take down the sail and walked off. Cdr. Pestonji came to me later and patted my back and said don't worry. Go and sail your race and I will take care of the Secretary Naval Sailing Club.

Officers like Keki Pestonji therefore command respect. Most other senior officers that I have worked with demanded respect.

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## Doc Tarun & the Navy Swimming Team

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*Commander Ashok Dewan (Retd)*

In 1974 I had been deputed by Kehar Singh of INSCB to 'take charge' of the naval swimming team for the Services Championship at Calcutta in September 1974. That was the team to die for...in our midst we had Rana, Kunju, Nair, Chakraborty - all national level swimmers. Rana was the national record holder for 1500 metres freestyle, and the others were in the country's top 5 in the 100s and 200s.

One morning I get a call from Asvini (Kehar Singh) to report post haste to the MI Room to complete hospital admission formalities for few members of the Navy Swimming team. The early morning Sports Party 3-Tonner from Angre to Navy Nagar had lost control on wet roads and crashed and scraped along the wall of the Dockyard and C-in-C's residence gate. INSCB's swimming, wrestling, and basketball teams had all been on board and many were injured, wounds and gashes, but fortunately no fractures.

The Swimming team unilaterally decided that go to Calcutta they must, regardless of the injured amongst them requiring daily medical dressing. To us, all the freestyle events were a given, but we could only make it to second place. What we were also really eyeing was the rough-tough Water Polo cup as we had many 'sprinters' in our midst. But the team was wounded, temporarily incapacitated, with Rana the star, having stitches on his skull and Nair a bad gash on his upper arm.

We moved Bombay to Calcutta by rail, a motley collection of wounded team members, with a

'sports party' POMA in our midst. It had been decided that we would move out of the limelight and trouble the Medical Officer of INS Krishna, dry docked at Garden Reach, away from the prying eyes of a couple of the tough Army teams. That's how Surg Lt Tarun Prakash, (read, Doctor Tarun to the team) got inducted as a member of the swimming team! Daily attention for about 6 members on board Krishna, his personal follow-up visits on a ramshackle scooter to our outhouse accommodation where these 6 were housed, endeared him to the team. It was touch and go, they were declared 'fit to swim', albeit Rana with a skull cap (shaved off), with him telling his Army 'yaars' that there was a bereavement in the family and he had to have his head covered, etc!

We did okay, came second in the swimming as expected, and regrettably second in the Water Polo too. A couple of the opposing teams went (and that's putting it mildly!) for Rana, Kunju, Nair, etc during the 4 chukkers, in particular for the wounds – which opened up - and we had to keep substituting with B team members. Also, lack of pool practice when we should have been peaking, showed up in hindsight.

To me, the tribute to Doc Tarun by the swimming team the night before we left Calcutta, said it all. I was personally so glad to have a friend, confidant, strategy partner, with me at Calcutta those days.

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## Personal Tribute to Vice Admiral MK Roy

*Rear Admiral A P Revi (Retd)*

We go back a long way, the Admiral and I – way back to the late 50s. But it was only in Vizag—when I was the Senior General Manager at the Dockyard that I had the privilege of looking after the Eastern Fleet under his command. I came to know him much better and more intimately after he took over the helm of the nuclear submarine project. He became a regular visitor to USSR as a part of the high powered technical team under Dr Raja Ramanna. They came with the mandate to steer through the nuclear submarine programme. As the Naval Attaché - I served as the facilitator at Moscow. At that point of time, even CNS was out of the loop. Later, when he became the Director General of the Advanced Technology Vessel project – I served under him as the Programme Director.

Besides the late PM Indira Gandhi - the driving force behind the programme were the trio from the Madras Presidency College (President Venkatraman, Dr Raja Rammanna and Admiral Roy). In my opinion, if anyone deserves to be christened as the father of the Indian Navy's nuclear submarine programme - it would be Admiral Roy. His contribution to the programme is

comparable with that of Admiral Rickover of the US Navy and Engineer Admiral Kutov of the Soviet Navy. Without his untiring efforts, determination, foresight and tenacity - INS Arihant would never have been a reality. In spite of the top secret seal put on the project - he managed to innovate ways and means of inducing the best Indian Public and Private Sector Enterprises to actively participate in the programme.

His diplomatic skills worked over time with the Soviets and he built deep personal and professional rapport with all who mattered for

the project in USSR. In the period – Marshal of the Soviet Union Ustinov, Ogarkov, the legendary Admiral of the Fleet of Soviet Union Gorshkov, Engineer Admiral Kutov and Minister of shipbuilding Igorov – all became household names in the naval lexicon.

Admiral Roy gradually built up and meticulously put together a highly motivated multi disciplinary team to see the project through. All the institutions involved in the design, development, and construction and





testing of the submarine and its associated systems were conceptualised, sanctioned and infrastructure created from the scratch. Under his stewardship, collaboration agreements with soviet and indigenous industry were formalised. No aspect was left to chance – commencing with the lease agreement in respect of INS Chakra I and training of the crews in USSR – to establishment of the total infrastructure in India. He had the great satisfaction of having been able to witness the fruits of his labour in his life time. He was pragmatic in his approach and a realist by nature. If he could have had his way with the overbearing high profile scientists at the helm – we would have had the Arihant operational at least ten years ahead of the present schedule. He was a hard task master with a compassionate heart. We in the Navy and the nation should be proud and eternally grateful

to him for having put India on the strategic map of the world.

Finally getting down to my personal indebtedness and admiration for the Admiral – I would like to relate one aspect of his character that most of the readers may not be aware of. At the tail end of my career – I was in serious difficulty with the establishment. At that point of time – Admiral Roy took me under his wings and supported me to the hilt, under trying conditions and against severe odds. Even after my retirement - he continued to provide moral support. He encouraged me to write in professional journals and finally saw me through the publishing of my maiden book, late last year.

Farewell, dear Admiral - we will miss you.

ap.revi@gmail.com

## Vice Admiral Mihir Kumar Roy—as I knew him

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*Surgeon Commodore Ranjit Das (Retd.)*

I met (then) Lt. Cdr Mihir Kr. Roy in 1961 at Cochin where we were para cabin mates at North Wardroom Mess. I was PMO INS Venduruthy, and he was posted to INS Garuda. As our routines were different we used to meet only in the evenings on the long verandah on the front row of the Mess. I remember he brought one Spanish Guitar from France for his brother-in-law and on his request I carried the same to Calcutta and handed over the item at their South Calcutta abode namely 'Shiuli Bari' which house I visited many a times later. Thus began my acquaintances with Admiral Roy which continued for about five decades.

In late 1970s when I was Medical Specialist

in INHS Kalyani he took over as C-in-C, East – after Vice Admiral Shunkar had left. His eldest son Prabir studying in St. Stephens fell sick at Delhi when the anxious father brought him to Navy House. After a couple of weeks he recovered and was sent back to Delhi. During that period I had to make several visits to Navy House and our acquaintances became closer.

After his retirement when he was at Safdarjang Enclave house, I was posted to Sena Bhavan as DMS (Navy). Unfortunately Mrs. Roy fell sick and required Cardio Vascular intervention. During that period I accompanied her to a Private Hospital several times along with



Admiral Roy. After she recovered - I and my wife visited her in their residence. Later Admiral Roy with Mrs. Roy visited us at our 44, Kota House residence.

Later while at Calcutta he had a fracture femur and admitted to Calcutta Command Hospital – when I used to visit him and tried to convince the Commandant and the Surgeon to further improve the facilities to make him more comfortable in bed – in plaster.

In 2011 when I took over as President of Navy Foundation, Calcutta Charter both Admiral Roy and Mrs. Roy were there and joined the

applause in the auditorium to felicitate me.

And on June 30, 2013 during the condolence meeting for the departed officer at INS Netaji Subhas Officers' Mess – the present President of NFKC after reading the condolence – message to the veterans requested me to say a few words.

With a very heavy heart and suppressed emotion, I did speak to a silent auditorium narrating my years of association with the Admiral. May his soul rest in peace.

Sd.sadhan09@gmail.com

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## A Veteran of Simplicity

*Vice Admiral V L Koppikar (Retd.)*

Reading about the demise of Commodore S K Chatterjee on 04 Sep 2013 at the age of over 101, reminded me of an incident in the early '90s when I was Chief of Personnel at Naval Headquarters.

The navy had then just announced a scheme of honouring senior veterans with a handsome gratuity of Rs 18000/- on their attaining the age of 80 years. Commodore Chatterjee was one of the first veterans to qualify for this gratuity and as he was living in New Delhi, I decided to host a small tea reception in his honour and present him the cheque.

All of us present on the occasion were much impressed by the ease with which Commodore Chatterjee held himself and moved around without help or support from anyone. If my memory serves me well, he was dressed in a combination of half sleeved shirt

and a short and wore open sandals on his feet. His simplicity of dress and demeanour were touching indeed. After the presentation, we spent some time reminiscing about the good old days and when the reception was over he said his good-byes to all, mounted his bicycle on which he had come and rode away steadily to his home.

### **P.S.**

Next year, the good news is that I shall be attaining the age of 80 years. The bad news however, is that the great scheme of generous gratuity for veterans of that age was withdrawn within the first few years, being economically unviable! Also, the last time I rode a bicycle was about two years ago in Germany. I am sad to say that I had to dismount half way because of a serious leg cramp. Loser all the way!

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## Commander Neville Mullerworth – A Tribute

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*Vice Admiral H Johnson (Retd.)*

Neville Mullerworth will be affectionately remembered by all those who were privileged to know him well. He was a true personification of the proverb “Still Waters Run Deep”. Quiet, unassuming and a thorough gentleman he was a font of wisdom and knowledge when he could be drawn out of his shell. Broadminded and generous in word and deed he never had a bad word for anyone or hesitated to help deserving charities.

I first met Neville at the Hockey Field in mid-fifties when we were both in the Navy and played for the same team. Extremely light footed and agile he dominated the game. Since we played in the adjacent positions he often rescued me from my stupid mistakes. Though he was a senior player he never ever taunted or chided me after the match. Being in different branches and ships I did not see much of him when I moved out of Mumbai.

After retirement several years later I found that Neville was a frequent visitor to my late brother’s house as they had adjacent flats. My Brother’s household treated him as elder of the family and in turn he referred to them as “my extended family”. Co-incidence of residence gave me an opportunity of getting to know him better. As common visitors, I met him often but definitely on every Sunday when we travelled

to church together. During our conversations I found him to be a live “google”. Besides his professional knowledge of Engineering and ships, he seemed to know all about any topic related to my many questions. He was a frequent visitor to the British Council Library and read books on diverse subjects.

Neville was particularly knowledgeable about Christianity and its history and often quoted references verbatim. His absence will leave a significant gap in our church life and our religious discussions in which he always displayed complete mastery of the subject. He would often draw our attention to some vital but obscure aspects which immeasurably added to the depth to our deliberations.

Personally I will miss him most on every Sunday morning at exactly 0800, the time he called to confirm if I was going to church.

Neville is survived by his son Aubrey and daughter- in-law Seema.

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### **Editor’s Note:**

*In Quarterdeck 2012, Late Cdr NA Mullerworth had written a very affectionate tribute to his late sister Ms Freda who had served the Royal Indian Navy as WRNS during world war II.*

## Commodore J S Brar - A Friend Indeed

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*Commander Trilochan Singh Trewn (Retd)*

Commodore Jaswinder Singh Brar expired peacefully on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at Chandigarh. He was one who endeared everyone far and near him. I served with him twice, once when he was undergoing his engineering training at INS Shivaji,

Lonavala and next during last thirteen years or so when he had finally settled down at Chandigarh after relinquishing his duties with GRSE at Kolkata. Commodore Brar was one of those rare officers who tended to excel in every activity he



took in his hands. Not only did he bring credit to his shipbuilding acumen while he served in Kolkata he displayed his qualities as a kind, noble, generous, highly intelligent engineer officer while running charity homes discussing with foreign industrialists, dealing with his juniors and seniors and winning honors like Nao Sena Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, etc. It was on 26 Jan 1969 when he was awarded his Nao Sena Medal for his brave action involving personal valor by President of India while serving on board INS Beas in Arabian sea in a daring and risky sea operations. He was awarded his sea watch keeping engineer's certificate on board the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant in 1964 while equally qualifying for obtaining the Commodore Knott essay writing competition while undergoing the prestigious Defence Services Staff course in 1975. Soon after this he was selected in 1976 for a three years deputation to Ethiopian naval college in Massawa, Ethiopia to impart special training to their naval officers. It may be recalled that those were very difficult days in Ethiopia after overthrow of emperor Haile Selassie while general law and order situation in that country was very dicey, unsafe, and insecure with frequent dusk to dawn curfew in several places along with frequent changes in local political setup.

After award of Vishisht Seva Medal in 1991 he was appointed as Principal Director of Fleet Maintenance in Naval Headquarters, New Delhi. This appointment covered a large area of responsibility like scheduling/planning and monitoring of maintenance/refit of all ships and submarines, about 160 in number, of different makes/designs of machinery and weapon system. Some four years ago I had presented to him a minor gift to his versatile skill in playing golf. One more gift for him had just arrived from USA before I came to know about his sudden final departure. Apart from various qualities narrated above he had certain superb qualities not normally imbibed by most of us. During mid 1993

he was selected by the Public Enterprises Selection board as the Director Ship Building of Garden Reach ship building yard at Kolkata on permanent absorption basis from the Navy. During that period the GRSE was having several functional and financial problems. This prevented him from building more modern sea going vessels. Hence a modernization revised plan was formulated despite resistance by their labour union and tide slowly turned in yard's favour. More orders and more profit followed. GRSE started building modern warships for Indian Navy. She was conferred status of Mini Ratna category 1 in 1991, constructed and successfully built several hovercrafts for Indian Coast Guard as per their requirements and specifications.

Commodore J.S.Brar retired from GRSE on 30 April 2001 and settled down at Chandigarh. From now on he with his versatile wife Meli dedicated himself and his family resources for welfare of others in his village. He, his father and brothers had already started a helpage India Mobile Medical van for the village to provide medical support for elderly pensioners.

Brar sahib have a married son and a daughter happily settled. He shared his personal views on his religious beliefs too. He specifically admired the few lines on definition of a Brahma giani as indicated in Sukhmani sahib. Then again once he wanted me to clarify to him the contents of the last shlokas of second chapter of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita which when elaborated means, "O Arjun this is the serene stage after achieving which even for a while a human being gains the Brahma Nirwan". This was two years ago. In March 2013 when I was trying to bow before his fully dressed body being made ready for the final journey I asked a humble question to myself, "was it not the final serene stage for this great man."

tstrewn@gmail.com



## Commodore CTD Nair, – A Tribute

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*Commodore I P Antony (Retd)*

Veteran Cmde CTD Nair passed away on 07th September 2013 after a short hospitalisation at Calicut. He is survived by his wife Mrs. Vishalakshi Nair and two children: Deepa and Dinesh.

I was at the funeral ceremony on 8th September along with some senior members of NFKC. While standing in a pensive mood near to the funeral pyre, my memories flashed back half a century, when I first met him at INS Circars in 1963. Our association continued even after our retirement as house visits to Calicut, mails and on telephone.

“CTD” as he was popularly known was an unassuming person with a bundle of spontaneous jokes that used to generate bursts of laughter among those who were in his company on social gatherings.

He began his naval career right at the bottom and rose steadily in ranks till he retired in 2002 as Commodore. He had held many important appointments as an Electrical Officer. Some

of these appointments were Electrical Officer, INS Rajput, Training Commander, INS Valsura, Joint Director (Electrical) DMDE, Hyderabad and Commandant Embarkation Headquarters, Chennai.

In all those appointments he had his distinct imprint of honesty, commitment and innovation that had held him in high esteem among his superiors and peers.

A few years after his retirement, he did not keep good health leading to medical complications that finally resulted in amputation of a leg. During these trying years his wife Vishalam was at his side as a pillar of strength. She is a typical Indian Housewife who took care of the family during his long absence on duty from the family and will continue to be so in the years to come although both their children are very well placed.

There are many who remember “CTD” as lovable soul and it is difficult to believe that he is no more amongst us. May his soul rest in peace! Adieu!

ipantony@hotmail.com

## Commander (SDC) C K Antony -A Tribute

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*Commodore J P Abraham (Retd)*

Veteran Cdr (SDC) CK Antony passed away on 21st September, 2013, at the age of 79. Born on 8th May, 1934, in Aranattukara of Thrissur district, he was the eldest of seven children to Mary and Chiramal Kuriappan. He joined the Indian Navy as a Signalmen in 1951 and was commissioned on 30th September, 1967. During his service in the Indian Navy, he has served in various establishments and ships, including INS Vikrant during the Indo-Pak conflict of 1971. He also served as an instructor at the Signal School, Kochi and as Officer -in-Charge of Naval Detachment, Kavarati in the Lakshadweep Islands. His last assignment in

the Navy was as OIC, COMCEN, Kochi in 1989. On retirement from the service he had a stint in the Merchant Navy for over a decade.

His naval heritage remained a vital part of Antony's life, joy, pride and sense of accomplishments till his very last day. No anecdote of his was without its naval setting. He carried the sterling qualities of the Indian Navy into his personal life, making friends of all he met with a rare sincerity and integrity. He is survived by his wife Lilly, daughter Shinie and son Dr. Shaji.

jpkochi@gmail.com

## Mrs Phylis Pereira – A Tribute

*Commodore BR Sen (Retd)*

I had the privilege, honour and good fortune to have served two stints with the legendary Admiral Pereira when in 1976 he was the Commander-in-Chief West and thereafter when he was the Chief of Naval Staff in 1979 as his Flag Lieutenant. My job entailed that I take care of the Admiral's official and social engagements as also the family's domestic needs.

On first meeting Mrs Pereira at the Navy House in Mumbai, observing my edgy countenance, she put me at ease and said "Son, don't call me Ma'am, call me Ma, we have no son, you we're sure will fill that void." Ever since I became a part of the Pereira family!

As I gradually came to know her I found she was the most extraordinary human-being with elephantine memory and wealth of knowledge about everything under the sun, she was endowed with a heart of gold and bountiful compassion and kindness. She was truly a pillar of strength behind not only her beloved husband, Ronnie but for the entire naval community. Ma, lived a remarkable life that has inspired and will continue to guide generations of naval families. She was always generous with her time and her affection for others. As the President of Navy Wives' Welfare Association she followed an open door policy and made herself available despite busiest schedules to meet the ladies and listen to their woes. She accepted others problems as her very own and invariably found a solution to their problems. She loved the Navy as much as the Admiral loved and cared for his Navy and together they became the sole guardian and caretaker of our navy giving it everything they had, generations will remember her



contribution to the fabric and value system with a deep sense of involvement and belonging.

She was the perfect hostess and a perfectionist in every way. Ma, was deeply in love with her garden and had intricate knowledge in the art of gardening. Every year she would take pride in winning the coveted prize of best garden and lawn in the national capital beating the Air Force House, her closest rival. During the winter



months she would spend several hours tending to the flower beds she would carefully lay each season. Ma was a voracious reader and often read through the whole night to complete a book. All her life she showed great dignity and honour. She was a great cook and despite the several cooks she had in the retinue, she would prepare delectable dishes for special guests, and to her I was most special. Every evening on returning from work alongwith the Admiral, she would invariably feed me with her own hands the dishes I was fond of. On Tuesdays routinely she asked me to lunch with them, a day prior she made it a point to ask me what exotic dish I wanted her to prepare for lunch the following day. Such concern, love and care she showered on me each day is unimaginable!

After Admiral Pereira succumbed to the dreaded disease in 1992, she faced the tragedy with much fortitude and led a simple & Spartan life, never complaining or ruing the fact that she was bereft of a decent dwelling or a dwelling she could call her own for she had a deep and unshakable faith in the almighty until her very end. When I visited Ma last time in 2009, I had carried some fruits, fresh flowers and chocolates that she loved. On handing these over she immediately put these away and told me she would hand these over to the Old Age Home nearby, the inmates of which were more needy than her. By then Ma appeared very frail and appeared to be losing the zest for life.

I will miss her dearly for the rest of my life but will forever treasure the memories of her and all the values of life that I learnt from her. She always told me I was to her more than her son, at this emotional moment I want to tell her that to me she was more than my own mother for my mother had two other offsprings but she had none!

As I pen down these lines, I am called by Sharda from Delhi, he has just got the tragic news of Ma's passing away and cried inconsolably just as he did when he arrived for Ronnie's funeral. Sharda served as the immensely devoted Steward at Navy House and now doing well in the hotel industry. Ma, all these years deligitly kept in touch with all who served them, always mindful in not forgetting anyone.

Her earthly loss is truly heavenly gain. May Ma Rest In Peace. Thank you ladies and gentlemen for taking the trouble of coming to the memorial service .

[bhaskarranjansen@yahoo.co.in](mailto:bhaskarranjansen@yahoo.co.in)







## Obituary

Ser no.	P.No.	Rank	Name	NoK	Date of demise	Address
1.	03530-A	LCDR	<b>KC Bansal</b>	Mr Samir Bansal	17 Nov 2012	Mr.Samir Bansal Kothi B-1, sector-61 NOIDA – 201307 Tele: 0120-4275404
2.	98005-N	CDR	<b>Rathin Kumar Das</b>	Smt Dolly	22 Nov 2012	Mrs Dolly 158/1A, New Ali pore Block-G, Kolkata-700052 Mob: 09334981157 Tele: 033-23961157
3.	01020-T	CDR	<b>Mammen Mathew</b>	Smt Suma Mammen Mathew	27 Nov 2012	Smt Suman Mammen Methew Pallathu, 48/622 Keerthi Nagar, Deshabhimani Road, Elamakkara PO Kochi-682026 Tele: 0484-2537462
4.		CAPT	<b>DC Chopra</b>	Smt Urmila Chopra	14 Dec 2012	Smt Urmila Chopra Chopra House Near Dhakauli Dist. Zirakpur Punjab Tele: 09779801655
5.		CDR	<b>Balakrishnan Sreekumaran Nair</b>	Smt Saraswathi Nair	20 Dec 2012	Smt Saraswathi Nair House No. 212, Defence Colony, Indira Nagar Bengaluru-560038
6.	R0182-W	CDR	<b>Rodney Cecil Todd</b>	Smt Barbara Ethel Todd	21 Dec 2012	Smt Barbara Ethel Todd Collier Park Village Unit, 10/2 Bruce Street COMO, WA 6152, Australia Tele: +61893130310
7.	00109-Y	CAPT	<b>Beney Bhushan</b>	Smt Kamala Bhushan	13 Dec 2012	Mrs Kamala Bhushan 9-E , Harbour Heights'A' Building, N.A. Sawant Marg, Colaba Mumbai- 400 005 Tele: 022-22852381 Mob: 099840066637
8.	00601-R	CDR	<b>Mandepanda Bopaiya</b>	Smt Sumathi Bapaiya	01 Feb 2013	Smt Sumathi Bopaiya 149 Jal Vayu Vihar Kammanhalli main Road Bengaluru – 560043 Tele : 080-25441389
9.	50108-F	CDR	<b>Madan Lal Mohan</b>	Smt Shashi Mohan	13 Feb 2013	Smt Shashi Mohan H.No.1015 (1 <sup>st</sup> Floor) Sector-7, Punchkula Haryana – 134109 Tele; 0172 4641228 Mob: 09216961041
10.	03011-T	CDR	<b>Devbrat Chakraborty</b>	Smt Anju Chakraborty	28 Feb 2013	Smt Anju Chakraborty 12-B Mande Villa Garden Flat 4f, Kolkata - 700019



11.	50041-B	CMDE	<b>JL Mehra</b>	Smt Chander Mehra	18 Mar 2013	Smt Chander Mehra 285, DDA (SFS) Flats Gulmohar Enclave New Delhi – 110049 Mob: 9958711978 Mob: 9811047332
12.	40171-Y	CMDE	<b>JS Brar</b>	Smt Milwant Kaur	18 Mar 2013	Smt Milwant Kaur House No. 2238 Sector 21, Chandigarh Tele: 9872664026
13.	00845-w	LT	<b>PA Abraham</b>	Smt Reena Abraham	19 Mar 2013	Smt Reena Abraham 11-C Maison D'or Panampilly Nagar (Opposite Central Hospital, Old Avenue Central) Kochi – 682036 Mob: 09446347565 Mob: 09400404036
14.		RADM	<b>K Sridharan</b>	Smt Sumi Krishnan	19 Mar 2013	Smt Sumi Krishnan 103, Saras Court, 185, 5 <sup>th</sup> Main, Defence Colony Indira Nagar Bengaluru – 560038
15.	01938-B	CDR	<b>Pancha Nand Singh</b>	Smt Anita Singh	20 Mar 2013	Smt Anita Singh P 1/25, Block 5 Kailash Dham, Sector-50 NOIDA – 201301 Tele; 9711451867
16.	00705-A	CDR	<b>Lalit Kumar</b>	Smt Renuka Kumar	26 Mar 2013	Smt Renuka Kumar D-79, Sector-21 C Jalvayu Vihar NOIDA – 201301 Tele: 9811873286
17.	00279-H	RADM	<b>PP Iyer Sivamani</b>	Smt Leela Sivamani	11 Apr 2013	Smt Leela Sivamani No.1 Venkateshwara Nagar, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street, Adyar, Chennai -600020 Tele: 044 24918723
18.	50326-A	CAPT	<b>Rajan George</b>	Smt Sugandha Sukrutaraj	30 Apr 2013	Smt Sugandha Sukrutaraj173, Tower 1, Pebble Bay Apartments,1 <sup>st</sup> Main, RMV Stage 2, HIG Colony Bengaluru – 560094 Tele: 8971200795
19.	00040-R	VADM	<b>MK Roy</b>	Smt Aprajita Roy	20 May 2013	Smt Aprajita Roy 636-B, Sector-15, Part-1Gurgaon-122001 Tele: 0124-2334868, 0124-26512701
20.	50089-N	CAPT	<b>Trilok Kumar Kohli</b>	Smt Kanan Bala		Smt Kanan Bala A/3 43, Scheme No.54 Vijay Nagar Indore Madhya Pradesh-452010
21.	00823-W	CDR	<b>Om Prakash Mathur</b>	Smt Manju Mathur	26 May 2013	Smt Manju Mathur 23123, Prestige Shantiniketan ITPL Road Bengaluru-560048



22.		CDR	<b>Anup Kumar Haldar</b>	Smt Keka Haldar	26 Jun 2013	Smt Keka Haldar 302, Sri Balaji Mansion Priya Colony Phase II Plot No.9, kalaguda Secunderabad - 500015
23.	86847-B	CDR	<b>HP Sharma</b>	Smt Prema Sharma	01 Jul 2013	Smt Prema Sharma C/o Navy House Village – Bhogpur PO- Usram, Tehsil-khair Dist-Aligarh (UP)-202138
24.	00118-F	CMDE	<b>Raj Anderson</b>	Smt Roam Isabelle Anderson	13 Jul 2013	Smt Roam Isabelle Anderson13 MIRATON Gardens Airport Road Chicalim PO Goa-403711 Mob: 09823447887
25.		CAPT	<b>NJ Saldanha</b>	Ms Sunita Saldanha	16 Jul 2013	Ms Sunita Saldanha11 Rashmi, Dmonte Park Road, Bandra (West), Mumbai – 400005
26.	50119-f	CDR	<b>Ranvir Chandra Khosla</b>	Smt Sunita Khosla	20 Jul 2013	Smt Sunita Khosla S-104, First Floor Greater kailash, Part 2 New Delhi – 110048 Tele: 011-29217907
28.	01031-T	CDR	<b>Srinivas</b>	Smt S Kanchana	06 Aug 2013	Smt S Kanchana "SIPPY", No-4 Twin House, Parsn Gardens, Melur Road, SRIRANGAM, Trichy Tamil Nadu – 620006
29.	60011-N	CMDE	<b>RC Bhatnagar</b>	Smt Santosh Bhatnagar	25 Aug 2013	Smt Santosh Bhatnagar F-6, Reliance Park Margoa Colva Road, Per Seraulim, Margoa, Goa Tele: 09224460093
30.	R0041-T	CMDE	<b>Sudhir Kumar Chatterjee</b>	Mr. Rohit Chatterjee	04 Sep 2013	Mr. Rohit Chatterjee A-9/1, Vasant Vihar Ground Floor New Delhi – 110057 Tele: 011-26140901
31.	50450-H	CMDE	<b>CTD Nair</b>	Smt Visalakshi Nair	07 Sep 2013	Smt Visalakshi NairSri Chakra House Ponnapurathju, Velliaparamba 6/2 Kozhikode - 673608 Mob: 09971598130 Tele: 0495-2358248
32.	81901-N	CDR	<b>CK Antony</b>	Smt Lilly Antony	21 Sep 2013	Smt Lilly Antony Chiramal House 40 jubilee nagar Stephen Pauda Road, Konthuruthy, Tevara, Kochi-682013 Tele: 0484-2663445
33.	00142-Y	CDR	<b>RN Gulati</b>	Smt Poonam Gulati	03 Oct 2013	Smt Poonam Gulati B-1,Hermes House1989 Convent Street Pune-411001



34.	01880-Y	CDR	<b>Sujay Ganguly</b>	Smt Sulagna Ganguly	22 Oct 2013	Smt Sulagna Ganguly 203/1 Bidhan Sarani Kolkata – 700006 Mob: 09674298094 Tele: 033-24488775
35.	83184-B	CMDE	<b>P Somaraju</b>	Smt Vijaya somaraju	20 Nov 2013	Smt Vijaya somaraju 41/A, AKASHAY 1 <sup>st</sup> Cross Poultry Farm Devsandra, KR Puram Bengaluru - 110036
36.		CDR	<b>Gyan Sagar Gupta</b>	Smt Satya Gupta	01 Dec 2013	Smt Satya Gupta D-110, Defence Colony New Delhi – 110024 Tele: 24611873
37.	50454-T	CDR	<b>BK Baruah</b>	Smt Shanta Krishna Baruah	12 Dec 2013	Smt Shanta Krishna Baruah D-502, Silicon Tower Near Vashi Rly Station Behind "Samna Daily Vashi, Mumbai-400705 Mob; 09867958721
38.	40020-B	CDR	<b>NA Mullerworth</b>	Mr. Aubery Mullerworth	14 Dec 2013	Mr. Aubery Mullerworth D-116, Sector 26 NOIDA – 201301 Mob: 09561086871

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## Italy Revisited

*Commander Sati Taneja (Retd)*

After taking premature retirement from the Navy in 1978 I joined the merchant navy and for the next four years I sailed mostly in the Mediterranean, based in Ravenna, Italy. Apart from the many ports visited I managed to see a bit of Italy whilst being put up in hotels awaiting ship. It is such a beautiful country and I was keen to visit it properly, preferably drive around the country. This didn't happen till 2012 some 30 years later when my brother, settled in Canada, suggested a driving holiday in Italy and I jumped at the idea. The preparation and plans during the 2 months preceding the trip was really exciting, deciding which places to visit and which we sadly had to leave out due to lack of time. Since both of us had visited Italy before and done the usual tourist type things like visiting museums, art galleries and the like, we agreed that on this trip we would not do any of that. This was to be just sightseeing of the countryside and the towns/villages we decided to visit. We eventually settled on the Lake Como area, the Cinque Terre and Tuscany, especially the Chianti area.

We met up at Milan airport on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2012, he having flown there from Toronto and I from London, where I was visiting my son. We hired a car and set off for Varenna on the shores of Lake Como in the North east of Italy abutting the Italian and Swiss Alps which contributed to the extraordinary picture postcard beauty of the area. We got to Varenna after about three hours of driving, located our hotel which was at a bit of a height. This contributed to the breathtaking view from our room as it seemed we were almost on top of the waters of Lake Como. Varenna is no more than a small village, local population some 600 almost all involved in the hospitality business catering to many

thousands of tourists in peak season. We had deliberately chosen the non peak season to avoid the large crowds and also to avail of cheaper hotel rates. Despite that when we set out in the evening after relaxing in our room for a couple of hours we found that there were still many tourists visiting. It took us a couple of hours walking around the village, taking in the many sights and restaurants, and we decided on one in the village square for our first meal on Italian soil. We were not disappointed and savoured it all while sipping Valpocella, a full bodied red wine I was familiar with from my earlier visits to Italy. The next day we drove around the lake after a sumptuous breakfast in the hotel as part of the tariff, and visited a number of villages on the opposite shore of the lake such as Lecce, Commo and Carnobio



Lake Como with Bellagio on the opposite shore

in which was the most luxurious 7 star hotel I had seen, the Villa de Este. We got back to the hotel, rested a bit and had dinner in a restaurant on the banks of the lake, trying a different dish and wine, both of which were most enjoyable. Our last day in the Lake Como area



was spent at the comparatively chic town of Bellagio which we reached by ferry from Varenna and spent the next few hours savouring the sun, the waters of the lake and the hilly terrain. We got back to our hotel in time to have a drink on the balcony of our room before setting out for our last sumptuous dinner in Varenna.

Our next stop was Rio Maggiore in the Cinque Terre area (the five lands). Situated in the mountains right next to the sea the five villages were totally isolated and not connected to each other till recently. The only connection is by train that traverses long tunnels cut into the mountains, a feat of engineering the locals are justifiably proud of, and a trekking path very popular with back packers. The drive to Rio Maggiore was on steep and curvy mountain roads. We located our small but quaint hotel, settled in and then walked along the small road to the sea where we ate in a recommended hotel and then back to the hotel to sleep.

The next day we planned to visit as many of the 5 villages that we could and wanted to do a short trek also. Unfortunately the path was closed due to a land slide and so we did them all by train. They were all pretty but each different from the other in some way. We got back to Rio Maggiore tired enough to rest awhile before setting up a hill to a highly recommended restaurant for a really sumptuous meal. Italian food and wine are world renowned and we enjoyed every meal we had.

The next morning we set off for the Chianti region of Tuscany, an area I have read and watched movies about and it was to be the highlight of our trip. The region is famed for its rolling hills, vineyards, its equable climate and ofcourse the world famous Chianti wine.



The rolling hills of Tuscany

Our first night was spent at the Villa Christina, Chianti. After dinner we chanced upon an underground' tunnel' broad enough to house shops, cafes and the like. Quite amazing but apparently these were quite common and had their origins centuries ago. We next drove to Radda in Chianti where we were to spend the next three nights, via Volterra and San Gimignano, both towns that merited longer visits, but alas! That night I tasted wild boar cooked Italian style and it was amazingly tender and delicious.

The next morning we set off towards Sienna but lost our way and decided to visit an old friend who lived in the area, and to keep Sienna for a full day visit the next day. This turned out to be an unfortunate decision because it poured like the monsoon rains. We got thoroughly drenched as we nevertheless walked around this historic city, second only to Florence in this region. The famous and spacious Piazza del Campo, the Duomo and



The wet Piazza del Campo

the St Maria del Scala were well worth the drenching! Wet and cold we hurried back to a

hot bath and an hour under blankets to revive us for a walk around Radda and our last dinner in Italy.

We left our hotel early the next morning as we had to return the hired car by noon at Milan Airport. Despite a wrong turn whilst leaving Radda, thanks to our borrowed GPS we managed to reach in time. My brother and I parted ways here as his flight was early the next morning whilst mine was in a couple of hours.

Thus ended one of the most memorable holidays I have had, one I had looked forward to with great anticipation. I am glad to say I was not disappointed.

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## Trinidad & Tobago

*Commander Deepak Loomba (Retd)*

Trinidad & Tobago are the Twin Jewels among the beautiful Islands of the Caribbean. I had visited Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) for the first time in 2005, when my Daughter moved in with her husband after her Marriage. Though it was a two-week excursion trip yet it was a memorable one. So when I received an Invitation from my Daughter in early 2013, who was back once again in T&T, I could not resist the temptation and packed my Bags and was there for a 8 week trip in July 2013 with my wife.

We were received at the Piarco International Airport, Port of Spain by my Daughter with our grandsons aged 2 and 5 in tow. It had been a 19 hour tiring journey from Delhi, yet we were all excited and charged up to explore T&T to our hearts content. As we drove into the City with our Daughter proudly driving her recently acquired Audi Q7, Old memories started coming back and we started pin pointing places visited along the highway. To our surprise city had not changed very much during the last 8 years since we had visited Trinidad in 2005. We could see the Hi-Low Departmental store, West Mall, Price Smart Departmental Store, Movie Town Cinemas, Ferry Terminal and 200 year old Light house, helipad etc. My daughter pointed at a recently opened Indian Departmental Store where large numbers of Indian Grocery were now available for a price. During our drive, my grandsons were first to identify Movie Town frequented by them for viewing cartoon Movies.

My Daughter's residence at Eilerslie Park, one of the posh residential areas of Port of Spain with sprawling Bungalows with huge Lawns, plenty of Trees and Birds chirping virtually throughout the day, is dominated by Diplomats Residences. Almost all bungalows have private

swimming pools and at least 2-3 Mango trees with Mangoes hanging along their boundary walls tempting the passers by to pluck one odd.

T&T has dominating Indian influence with 40% population being of Indian origin. Between 1845 and 1917, about 1,45,000 workers were brought from India to work on sugarcane plantations, and eventually the majority of them settled down in T&T. Whether it is Indian street food – Doubles (pooris sandwiched with a layer of chhole with condiments /pepper sauce), Roti(Roomali Roti served with Meat/vegetables/Mango chutney), Phillourie (spiced split-pea dough balls served with tamarind chutney) potato pie/shark & bake (bhatura stuffed with shark fish/chana, salad/ sauces) — use of Indian spices, streets named after Delhi, Bombay, Mathura, and a number of







temples, Indian influence is omnipresent in all walks of life in T&T. Conspicuous among the temples is the Onion-domed Waterloo Temple jetting into the Sea, started by Sewadass Sadhu in 1947 but finally completed with government help in 1995 to commemorate 150 years of Arrival of Indians in T&T. Another major Hindu monument is a majestic 26 metre tall Hanuman murti, the largest Hanuman idol outside of India, gifted by Swami Ganpati Sachidanand of Mysore in 2003. With such strong Indian roots, it is no surprise that the Republic offers Indian citizens the privilege of Free Visa on arrival. As you strike a conversation with the local people of Indian origin you often find that their names are based on Indian mythology, such as Balram, Maharaj, Krishna, Sita, etc. and they express a strong desire to visit India some day.

Trinbagonians are simple, hardworking people who love good food, Chilled Carib Beer, good Pan Music and Cricket. One of the highlights of visiting T&T is the chance to sample the island's fantastic cuisine, a unique and addictive blend of African, Indian, Chinese, European and Latin American influences. A true Trini would never Lime (Socialise with a Drink) without a full stomach and no food is complete without use of Garlic & hot Pepper sauce.

### **Trinidad**

Trinidad with the island's best selection of restaurants serving great seafood, local music, clubs and accommodation, is a natural base from which to explore the rest of the country. It has a wealth of gorgeous beaches of Maracas, Las Cuevas and Blanchisseuse. Chaguaramas, a national park with a string of open-air clubs providing lively, sophisticated nightlife, restaurants overlooking the seaside/ yacht clubs. For the ultimate escape, however, it is not far to the rocky, wooded islands of the Bocas. In Trinidad there are tropical rainforests



with towering canopies of mahogany and teak, wetlands harbouring all manner of exotic wildlife, and remote beaches where Leatherback turtles lay their eggs, not to mention opportunities for bird watching, with more than 430 brilliantly hued species. Just 40 minutes from Port of Spain lies the Caroni Swamp, the mangrove wetland which is home of the striking national bird, the Scarlet Ibis.

Maracas Beach lined with white sand is frequented by large number of Tourists. The hill Drive to Maracas is picturesque, the road winds through thick Rain Forest with an overview of the small Islands and deep blue Sea never leaving you alone as you drive. The view during the 20 km drive is breath-taking with viewpoints every few kilometres with shops selling local Artefacts, fresh Fruits, chilled Carib Beer and Snacks. The drive ends with a slope giving glimpses of the Beach lined with white sand, Coconut and Palm Trees on one side and Street food stalls selling Bake & Shark, Aloopie, Phillourie, chilled Beer and assorted Juices on the other along with the Parking area. We had carried our folding chairs and Umbrella, Children's Beach toys, and Sun protection Lotion as except early morning and evening Sun is very bright and sunburns are common. The exhilarating experience keeps bringing you back to this Beach during your stay.



Frankly, I have lost count of number of my visits.

Caroni Swamp Wetland is located at a distance of 25 kms from Port of Spain. Ideal time to visit is in the Afternoon so that by the time the Whalers pull you through the Swamp surrounded by Mangroves, its time for return of the National Bird Scarlet Ibis on the Trees which give a Scarlet hue to the Trees. The Power Boats are not permitted as they may scare the Scarlet Ibis away from their nesting Trees.

The beautiful drive to remote beaches where Leatherback turtles lay their Eggs was nearly 3 hours with Manzanilla Beach on the way. Manzanilla Beach is like a shallow Swimming Pool, you can steadily walk almost 500 meters into the Sea till the water reaches your Waist with occasional Waves. To watch the Leatherback Turtles we had to stay overnight as Turtles emerge from the Sea to lay their Eggs on the Beach only at night. We had to maintain silence and only small torchlight is



allowed to see the Turtles digging in the sand to lay their average 100 Eggs laced with white fluid and then covering the pit with Sand using their Fins. Only a few Eggs survive to deliver Baby Turtles as rest are eaten by Birds and stray dogs in the morning. It was a rare experience seeing the Leatherback Turtles laying their eggs.

The drive to Chaguramasis beautiful with Sea view all through with small Beaches used for partying with Snack and beer shops and Parks nearby. The drive ends with Yacht clubs with hundreds of Yachts hoisted on chocks. Located near one of the Yacht Club is a beautiful Restaurant "Zanzibar" overlooking the Seaside offering chilled Beer, White Wine and choicest snacks. One can spend hours guzzling Beer watching Yachts sailing in the Harbour.

## **Tobago**

Tobago surrounded by Atlantic Ocean on the one side and Caribbean Sea on the other is three hours away from Trinidad by Fast Ferry and 15 minutes by regular Air flights. We reached Scarborough, vibrant capital of Tobago by Fast Ferry "Spirit" for a long weekend. I was impressed by the sheer size and speed of the Ferry that could ferry up to 100 cars besides 500 Passengers at a record speed of 40 knots in 3 hours as against conventional Ferry that took 6 hours. On arrival



we headed straight for Magdalene Beach Resort where we were booked. It was a beautiful Resort spread out on an 18-hole Golf Course with option to enjoy the beautiful Beach, Swimming Pool overlooking the Sea or just play Golf using Golf Carts. Tobago has an array of beautiful Beaches, stunning coral reefs and

colourful Fish with hotels catering to every Budget. We had taken our Car on the Ferry that facilitated our trip tremendously. We drove along the highway encircling the Island to get a close look at the Island. A trip deep into the Sea on Glass bottom boat from Crown Point to view Coral Reefs and Colourful Fish and Snorkelling was most enjoyable.

Considering the vast gorgeous beaches, rainforests, thrilling nightlife, fine food, Liming, Music and exotic wildlife spread between the twin islands of T&T, it is not possible to see everything that T&T has to offer to a casual visitor in one trip. At the end of my second visit to these magical islands, I packed my bags with the hope of another visit soon, as my daughter would be based in T&T for at least another year.

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## Guide In Cairo

*Commander Sanjiv Kulkarni (Retd)*

During our recent visit to the Pyramids in Egypt we had the privilege of a young and knowledgeable guide. He was also very enthusiastic and proud about the wonderful heritage of his country.

Our group of the organized tour had a total of 27 persons. The eldest one being 71 years and the youngest was a school girl of 11 years. Then we had a student from Baroda who was all of 16 years but thought he knew the world better than anyone. There was this gentleman, Mr. Photographer, who was so interested in photography that he saw the pyramids and all the other sights only through the small video screen of his camera.

Just near the pyramids, the Guide explained the history and construction of the pyramids and said **“Follow Me”** with a Flag. As soon as the

guide turned to lead the way, some couples turned right to see what other attractions were there – there was a museum shop selling antiques. So they turned right. A few turned left to talk to a man with a camel. A few got busy with their cameras.

The guide was leading and there were only about 4 or 5 of us following him closely. The conversation at this stage was very interesting.

**Guide** – The pyramids are one of the 7 Wonders of the World.

11 Year Old – Mummy there is no connectivity here. I am not able to connect to facebook.

16 Year Old Smartie – Do you have a smart phone? What make is it?

Lady – I want to go shopping for my grandchild. They have such lovely shops in the town.



Lady – My legs are paining. It is so hot here.

Lady – I had a nice breakfast today.

**Guide** – The mass of the pyramid is estimated to be about 5.9 million tons. It consists of an estimated 2.3 million rocks.

Mr. Photographer – I am not able to get a good shot from this angle. I will go to the other side.

Lady (on call to India) – Son the pyramids are so sexy so sexy – you must come here for honeymoon.

**Guide** – There are 3 big pyramids in Egypt as you can see. In addition there are many smaller pyramids in Egypt.

11 Year Old – Mummy I cannot tell my friends I am at the pyramids. I want to go to the hotel.

16 Year Old Smartie – Do you have 3G or 4G phone?

Lady – I hope they will take us to the Cairo market tomorrow.

Mr. Photographer – I am able to shoot the second pyramid with my zoom.

**Guide** – Gentlemen and ladies please, I will show you better locations and spots for photography but right now you must follow me.

There are 27 of you but right now only 5 of you are here with me.

Gentleman – Is there any washroom here?

Lady- Today morning at breakfast there was no hot milk for porridge.

**Guide** – The pyramids were constructed between 2560 BC to 2540 BC. They will last for another 10,000 years.

Retired Professor – Which year were the pyramids built?

**Guide** – I just told you.

Lady – I hope they will take us to an Indian restaurant today for lunch.

Lady – I have to buy dates here for my son and daughter.

Lady – No the dates are cheaper in Turkey. You buy there.

Lady – They have a famous sweet here by the name Baklava.

**Guide** – You guys are so noisy.

I leave it to the imagination of the readers, to guess if the Guide accompanied this group for visits to other sights in and around Cairo!!

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# Storming The Summer of 2013

*Commander Subimal Dutt (Retd)*

Having bought an SUV after almost two years of deliberation, myself and son decided that there could be no better way of “blooding” it than driving it from Kolkata to Rajasthan and Delhi, thereafter to Chandigarh, Manali and Rohtang Pass. With luck we could take in Ladakh as well!

Setting off on 22nd May, we briefly stopped by at Burdwan, our first night halt being Bodhgaya, less than an hours drive off the National Highway. Most of Bengal and parts of Jharkhand were cool due to pre monsoon showers, the greenery soon making way for parched hilly regions of Jharkhand. Visiting Mahabodhi Temple with its imposing sculpture was revitalising, we also saw several temples built by South Asian Countries before we



started for Kanpur, our next halt. Progress was good, but we observed that inspite of paying frequent Toll Tax, the number of free riders outnumbered us, some were dangerous too! Mercury hovered around 42 deg, sometimes climbing. Bypassing holy cities of Benaras and Allahabad, quick lunch and we were on our last leg to Kanpur, making it after sunset, thanks to the excellent road. Locating our hotel in Civil Lines proved more daunting since several directions from well meaning passersby only brought us thicker into crowded bazaars and at one stage we were literally doing an obstacle course through the famous footwear market, way side shopkeepers were kind enough to move their makeshift stalls to enable our car to pass!

Golden Quadrilateral and our car seemed to be hitting it off well, so we decided to raise the bar next day-700 Kms to Ajmer. Starting after breakfast, we decided to have a ‘driving’ lunch, mercury reading 44 deg. Trucks, even though doing only 60 to 70 KPH, stuck to the fast lane, leaving those who wished to overtake, to handle the two wheelers and other ‘jay’ riders. We saw the grandeur of Fatehpur Sikri as well as some modern day sculpture being produced on the wayside.

Our tea break around 6 PM at a Dhaba in UP Rajasthan border can go down possibly as the shortest ever-mercury at 47 Deg! A little after sunset we were on the Pink City Bypass and at nightfall we made it to the Jaipur Ajmer Expressway - a 6 lane thoroughfare, driving on this stretch was exhilarating. Dinner time saw us home and dry-with my mother at Ajmer. My sister-in-law couldn’t help but quip that our meal breaks that day were like that in the Rajdhani Express. The car was checked out (full marks



to efficient and courteous Service) and we got the much needed rest too, taking a day trip of Jaipur organised by Rajasthan Tourism besides visiting the two famous religious shrines of Ajmer.

Resuming four days later (stay extended) next halt was at my brother's place in New Delhi. Due to shortage of time, it was not feasible to look up friends or seniors- fear of traffic jam and distances being the other deterrents. All hopes of catching a game at the Army Golf Course came to naught as the priority no.1 at dawn was to store water! Journey from New Delhi to Chandigarh was smooth. We experienced our first glitch with the car here as we tried to open the rear door-the boot was overstuffed and some loose luggage had lodged itself on top of the lock which failed to open automatically in spite of repeated attempts and was finally inoperative. Luckily, there was a good garage where our hosts got the defect rectified in double quick time. Talk about intelligent cars with their not so intelligent drivers!

We left Chandigarh next day for Manali, exiting the city with a few hiccups. The famous Sikh shrine-Anandpur Sahib was shining white at a distance as we drove past Nurpur on the State Highway. We had to make Chintpurni Shrine



before sunset, therefore we could not stop by. No visit to the North can however be complete without tasting the fare at the wayside Haveli Restaurant, we were no exceptions. By nightfall we arrived at Jwalamukhi after some two hours of driving-our last halt before enchanting Manali-it was every bit as beautiful as expected.

Rohtang Pass, a "must do" destination for visitors to Himachal, is only 52 Kms away from Manali-the road climbing all the way from 6400 ft to 13500 ft. If you are driving up by own car, you need a Permit.

Departing Manali, you leave the revered Hidimba Temple in a picturesque setting on your right, the road passing through Nehrukund with its Trout farms and restaurants. Further up, the exit to Solang Valley, also a very popular destination, is on the left. The climb is easy till you reach Gulaba some 10 Kms away,





thereafter it becomes arduous though scenic for the next 25 Km till you reach Marhi, a popular halt teeming with paragliders and picknickers. For the next 17 km, climb becomes grueling with traffic allowed one way in places and the road deteriorates due to rain and ice damage. The guardrail normally placed on the gorge side is conspicuous by its absence, forcing us to look straight ahead! Traffic is considerable, since on the previous day road was closed for maintenance, besides, the Pass was opened by Army only a few days earlier. Road winds up through ice covered hillsides, streams formed by the melting ice crossing the road at several places.

At last, the climb comes to an end and you arrive at a place resembling a fairground with hundreds of parked vehicles, tourists wearing any available protection against the cold all over the flat ice covered area, also crowded with food

Stalls and vendors of Winter Clothing. We drove up another Km, and there was the Pass in all its grandeur, pristine peaks beyond visible in all their majesty. This area was not crowded, so tourists including a few couples had the time of their lives on the ice covered slopes, their attempt to cavort in Bollywood style was however short lived, gravity winning hands down. Rented Gumboots and overalls were cumbersome; some users were seen to tumble on to the ice after a few steps. Snow mobiles and the few food stalls that had not wound up did brisk business-a piping hot cup of tea was like Manna from Heaven, ambient temp of 7 deg C!

Around 4.30 pm, abruptly the entire Pass was covered by clouds accompanied by moderately strong winds, rain started as well. People rushed back to their vehicles, a tourist who felt uneasy was helped to her vehicle. Rain and hailstones continued as we started our slow descent, outside temp fell to 4 deg, engine was kept running for cab heating. Patient evacuation by ambulance that arrived from Marhi perhaps, took nearly an hour, thereafter we were allowed to continue. Taxi, hired car drivers and mini truck drivers were by now restive, they tried to elbow everyone out, overtaking us from both sides. Mini truck drivers went to extent of rolling down the hillside at





bends for about 50 yards, rejoining the queue overtaking a dozen vehicles in the process. After descending a few miles, on a narrow damaged stretch, several trucks and a few cars on their way up were stopped to make way for the downhill traffic. Fresh coat of ice on the slopes as well on the roadside could be seen. But for the continuous battle against extremely harsh weather and terrain by the “Mountain Warriors”- brave men of The Border Roads Organisation, it is not possible to return unscathed from such a trip.

Arriving Marhi at about 7.30 pm, we were disappointed to learn that the Dhabas were shut down due to a high court order, cause-pollution. No drinking water, refreshments, no toilet facilities either. Himachal Tourism should realise the plight of tourists and provide an alternative. An elderly couple who ran one of these dhabas told us that on an earlier occasion when the weather worsened abruptly stopping movement of vehicles, roadside eateries had provided refreshments and shelter to hundreds of pilgrims.

Looking back- we cannot forget what Rohtang means in bothi (Ladakhi) -a pile of corpses (happened earlier when people tried to cross the Pass in Winter) and the Sign board that tells all-” respect the mountains and they will respect you”! Ladakh was shelved for the time being.

Return journey was smooth with a sparkling and lively Beas for company for quite a while during our descent (and a day’s stopover in Chandigarh) till we attempted to reach Gurgaon via Delhi-the dreaded summer and traffic jam caught up with us-saw the splendid Cantt area, Shankar Vihar and Maneckshaw Memorial en route, arrived Agra same night-no prizes for guessing why! Eleven days into



June-clouds with hint of rain as we left Agra for Benaras. We visited the sprawling BHU campus, sacred abode of Biswanath and of course the Aarti on the Ganges.

On 13<sup>th</sup> June covering 700 KM again, we arrived home after a 6000 km round trip! It was cool and rainy—Summer was effectively stormed!

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GoodKnight Advanced mosquito repellents help millions sleep well. In the market, we launched India's first soap made from vegetable oils. We were also one of the first to launch a hair dye specifically suited for Indian hair. Today, Colour Soft, Nupur and Expert are some of the most innovative and leading hair colourants in the market. Our thrusters and precision components passed the ultimate test, by helping launch Chandrayaan, India's first mission to the Moon. The highly respected and awarded Properties Division creates landmarks that people want to live in. Even in the virtual space, Gojiyo.com is India's first 3D virtual world. What's more, we have been

safeguarding vast areas of mangroves, way before environmental consciousness became a CSR activity. These are just some of the 100 plus firsts that we have clocked up till now. Today, we are a conglomerate spread across 60 countries, engaged in delivering products and services in over 30 distinct categories. We have gone global via

strategic acquisitions like Kayline, Issue Group, Rapidol and Kirky; and where required, have set up joint ventures with the best in the world, like Hershey's and Efacec. Constant innovation has helped us remain in touch with consumer needs and close to the hearts of half a billion people. Inspiration that has helped us

transform into a \$2.6 billion group raring for new challenges; with a management structure that is open to new ideas. Our human capital strength of over 20,000 is a mix of experience and youth, relooking at ideas, processes, skills, execution and delivery, with just one focus: how to enrich the consumer experience and make shoppers come back for more. The Godrej way is encapsulated in a simple philosophy. One that inspires us everyday. What we like to call Brighter Living.



This pictorial representation does not purport to be the political map of India.



### Mumbai Charter

10<sup>th</sup> Admiral Soman Memorial lecture was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at Asvini's auditorium. The talk was delivered by Mr. Prahalad Kakkar on "How to create & Value to whatever you do, stand by that value so that you can be judged by the value you create." The lecture was attended by over 200 veterans and their spouses.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2013 the annual golf tournament was played between the Western Fleet and the Veterans' teams at the US Club. Fleet Officers' team won the tournament.

Annual General Meeting of the Navy Foundation, Mumbai Charter was held at INS Trata on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2013. During the meeting Rear Admiral Arun Auditto (Retd.) and Lt Cdr Farookh Tarapore (Retd.) were re-elected as the President and Hon. Treasurer, respectively for a further period of three years. Since the last AGM held on 20 May 12, 135 new members have joined the Mumbai Charter. As on date, the Charter has 615 Life members.

The annual picnic which was sponsored by M/S Pipavav Shipyard was held at INS Trata soon after the AGM on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2013. CSO (P&A), Command Welfare Officer and Commanding Officers, Angre and Kunjali graced the occasion. With the DJ in attendance, professional singers with their oldie songs, plenty of drinks, food, games conducted by the Event Manager and finally prize distribution, the Picnic turned out to be a roaring success enjoyed by almost 250 Veterans and their spouses.





As part of the Navy Day celebrations, C-in-C, West had hosted lunch for about 500 Veterans at IMSC on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

A Day at Sea was organized on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013 for the Veterans which was attended by about 250 Veterans along with their families. A number of events at Sea were organized by the Flag Officer Commanding, Western Fleet, including Jackstay for the Ladies. The Sea outing was very much enjoyed by the Veterans and their families.



An In-House Matrimonial service launched on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010 for the benefit of the children of the Veterans was running very successfully. The profile of the Wards of Veterans is hosted on the NFMV website, as also forwarded to other Charters for wider circulation among naval veterans. This service has become so popular that even serving as well as Veterans of Army and the Air Force have begun to patronize it. So far at least 45-50 profiles have been circulated. It is a matter of great satisfaction that till date there were three successes, and it is hoped many more would follow.

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## Kolkata Charter

Quarterly meetings were held at Naval Officers' Mess, INS Netaji Subhas followed by luncheon. AGM of the Charter was held on 30 Jun 2013 and was well attended. During the meetings routine issues were discussed, however on two such meetings, presentations were given by Rear Admiral Subir Paul (Retd) covering his visit to Bangladesh and by Surg Cdr TR Bera (Retd) who made a presentation on Ladakh, covering a book that has been authored by him recently.

Under the aegis of the Charter, the 4<sup>th</sup> Admiral Adhar Kumar Chatterji Memorial





Lecture on “Maritime Dimensions of India’s Security” was delivered by Shri M K Narayanan, the hon’ble Governor of West Bengal on 06 Apr 2013 at the prestigious Bhasha Bhavan auditorium of the National Library, Kolkata. The Chief host for the programme was FO C-in-C, East and the lecture was delivered to a packed audience which included serving and retired personnel of all the three Services, Para Military forces, Coast Guard, senior Govt. dignitaries, diplomatic corps, media, academicians and the family members of late Admiral Chatterji. The event received adequate publicity in the media and was followed by a dinner hosted by FO C-in-C, East on board Eastern Fleet ships that were positioned for this important event.



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## Lucknow Charter

The land locked city of Lucknow has a sizeable presence of naval veterans and Lucknow Charter has over 40 odd members enrolled.

Around 60 odd persons including naval veterans, their spouses attended the cocktails/ dinner. Venue was the party room of Surya Officers’ Institute in Cantonment.

In keeping with the Esprit de Corps, about a dozen serving officers and families also made it to the function, adding colour and a touch of gaiety. The traditional naval symbol – a sailing boat was as usual procured, courtesy the Naval NCC Unit here.

The Charter President, Vice Admiral J C Sharma while thanking the veterans present, lauded the concerted efforts made by the Charter Vice President, Lt Commander G Masand and the Charter Secretary Commander Arvind Wilson to make the event

a grand success.

The Lucknow Charter was formed on 27th Jan 2013 during a general body meeting attended by about 25 naval veterans. During the meeting, the core committee members, namely the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer were validated and three more veterans elected to form the managing committee. The Charter has since been





registered with the Registrar of Societies Lucknow.

The print media coverage has been well received. It will go a long way in creating awareness among general public - specially the youth - about the Indian Navy.

There are more Veterans on our radar and shall be taken in due course of time. It is a time consuming process because most retired fraternity is spread in the suburbs - spread in all directions.

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## Delhi Charter

The year started with the annual RD Katari Memorial Lecture by Shri BG Verghese, who spoke on India, Pakistan and China: Continental and Oceanic Challenges and Opportunities, at the DRDO auditorium.

The annual lunch for the Veterans was hosted by the CNS on 17 Feb 13, at Naval Officers' Mess, Varuna. As usual, very large number of Naval Veterans and their better halves attended, making the most of a warm winter afternoon and the superb hospitality extended by the CNS. The event was preceded with AGM and GCM of the Navy Foundation, attended by representatives of all the Charters of the Navy Foundation.

The first get-together of the year was held at Varunika, the beautifully renovated IN auditorium at Nausena Bagh, Chanakyapuri, on 18 May 2013. About 150 members/spouses turned up, braving the summer heat to find an air conditioned and tastefully decorated venue, with INS India pulling out all stops to make our first gathering there a success.

The second get together of the year coincided with the AGM of NFDC on 09 Nov 2013, at the same venue. Attendance this time was just over 100. Cmde Lalit Kapur and Cdr Sharan Ahuja were elected as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, to replace previous incumbents who had resigned or were unable to carry out their duties due to pressing commitments.

Navy Day was celebrated as usual at Navy House on 04 Dec 2013, with very good attendance from all including the retired community.

The annual lunch for the Veterans was hosted by the CNS on 11 Jan 2014. Once again, Varuna saw numerous members of the retired community enjoying the CNS' hospitality as well as the company of former shipmates and colleagues.

The last function of the year was the RD Katari Memorial Lecture by Shri HS Brahma, Election Commissioner, regaling his audience on a cold winter evening and telling us about the "Challenges of Holding Free and Fair Elections in a Democracy". The venue this time was Varunika.



## Kerala Charter

The year started with an outstation visit by a team of 40 members to the new Naval Base at Karwar in Jan 2013. All members went by train and stayed at the NOI, Karwar for two days. During the stay, the members visited and climbed the historic Anjadip Island, drove round the Base and saw the various facilities and developments taking place. The boating, sailing, kayaking and beach side dining was very enjoyable. The members also visited the Nuclear Power Plant at Kaiga which is about 25 Km away. The Flag Officer, Karnataka hosted a dinner and also a high tea at home.

The Headquarters Southern Naval Command provided opportunity for the members to go to sea onboard the Naval Ship for a day on 09 Feb 2013. Members enjoyed the experience.

This year a Saturday evening picnic was arranged at the Heritage Methanam at Kumbhlagi Island on 16 Feb 2013. The picnic was very well attended and gave excellent opportunity to have a break from normal life, mutual interaction and spending some time together. Bus pickup and drop was arranged so as to avoid driving at night.

A Maritime Seminar called the **Marine SPICE 2013** was organised for better understanding of maritime issues amongst the general public. The support of National Maritime Foundation was taken for arranging the suitable speakers and the support of Kerala Management Association was taken for better access to the civilian professionals, business, industrial and Management community. The Seminar was held at Center Hotel, Panampilly Nagar on 13 March 2013 and was inaugurated by Admiral Sureesh Mehta (Retd), Chairman NMF. Vice Admiral Satish Soni, FO C-in-C, South delivered the Key Note address. Dr. Mohan

Guruswamy, Founder & Chairman of the Centre for Policy Alternatives gave the theme address. A special session was held during which the Guest of Honour, Hon'ble Shri Shekhar Dutt, Governor of Chattisgarh spoke and Mr. Antony Prince, CEO of SEDS, Kochi was presented with the National Maritime Foundation award for excellence in the Maritime field for his contribution to ship designing.

Pre lunch session was dedicated to Maritime Economic Aspects Chaired by Vice Admiral R P Suthan (Retd), President, NFKC. The subjects covered were Maritime Operations by Captain Raman, Senior Vice President of Karaickal Port, Offshore A energy was covered by Mr. Malolan Cadambi, MD, Green Shore Energy Ltd. Bengaluru, Ship designing and building was covered jointly by Mr Antony Prince and Cdr Krishnan, a Naval Architect. The post lunch session covered Maritime Security aspects chaired by Vice Admiral P Kaushiva (Retd), Director NMF. The topics covered were Ocean Security by Commodore S Vasam (Retd), Head, Centre for South Asia Studies, Chennai, Coastal Security by Vice Admiral MP Murlidharan (Retd), former Director General, Indian Coast Guard and Maritime Policing by Mr. Sylendra Babu, IPS, ADGP, Head Coastal Security Group, Tamil Nadu.

The NFKC members and their families attended the musical evening conducted by the Command on 17 Apr 2013 with the famous play back singer Sonu Nigam performing. About 85 members attended and really enjoyed the evening along with the serving personnel and their families.

NFKC honoured the National Hero and pride of the Indian Navy, Lt Cdr Abhilash Tomy, a serving officer for being the first Indian to do solo sailing, nonstop, unassisted circumnavigation of the globe on 08 May 2013 at the Engineer Officers'



Mess, Katari Bagh. Abhilash gave a briefing about the adventurous trip and the members interacted with him. He was presented a special memento on the occasion.

The Annual General Body meet was held on 12 May 2013 at the Talwar Hall, Signal School and was followed by a lunch at the NOI, Kochi. C-in-C was the Chief Guest and several officers of the Command with their ladies were invited.

On the Independence Day, 15 Aug 2013 the members and their families gathered together at the Marine Drive at Kochi in the morning, wearing Veteran's badge and with the National Flag sang the National Anthem together. The members observed two minutes silence for those submariners who lost their life in the INS Sindhurakshak mishap at Mumbai. Thereafter all walked along the Marine Drive walkway and later assembled to have breakfast together.

The Charter had its local festival celebration of Onam in the traditional style on 13 Oct 2013 with Officers from the command and civilian



dignitaries as guests. Special guests this year were the International officers undergoing training at Kochi. NFKC Scholarship awards were given to the meritorious students of the members and the deserving and needy students of the local civilian community.

The Charter is conducting outreach program with the donations made by the members for this purpose. Medical support and other support are being provided to the needy old age Home and orphanage.

The Naval Officers' Retirement Home Project has received good response and has been fully subscribed. The build construction is progressing satisfactorily and is expected to be commissioned by mid 2014. Due to additional demand an additional floor is expected to be added raising the number of dwelling units from 43 to 55.

A friendly Cricket Match was played between the NFKC and Navy (above 45) team and this was followed by the lunch hosted by the C-in-C. NFKC members participated in the other Navy Week activities also on the invitation of the Navy.

On the request of the Command the NFKC members have become local sponsors to the International students undergoing training with the Navy at Kochi. The members also have volunteered for supporting the Navy in its program for promoting Navy among the students at the schools and colleges.



## Bangalore Charter

A get-together was organised for the veterans on 14 Oct 2013. The event was co-sponsored by Veteran Cdr RK Kumar of M/s Trident Hyundai. Latest models of Hyundai cars were displayed during the event. A free service check up for all cars and test drives were also offered. A gathering of 100 members with spouses attended the event.

The next Get-together was held on 24 Feb 2013 with “PINK” as the theme. The best dressed lady in “PINK” was presented with a “Gift Hamper”. The event attracted a large gathering of 110 members and spouses.

A milestone was achieved on 25 May 2013 as “Admiral RL Pereira Memorial Lecture” was inaugurated by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral DK Joshi. The event was co-sponsored by Chairman & Managing Director of Bharat Electronics Ltd, Bangalore and was held at Basantra Auditorium, MEG & Centre,

Bangalore. The event was attended by Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, FOC-in-C, West, Flag Officers of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Defence and Civilian elite of Bangalore. A large number of Naval Veterans also attended the event. Former Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Arun Prakash delivered a lecture on “India as a 21st Century Power— the Maritime Dimension”. The event culminated in a Gala Dinner hosted by the CNS at the Naval Officers’ Mess, Bangalore.

The Annual General Body Meeting of the Charter was held on 25 Aug 2013 and the following were elected as Office Bearers for the year 2013-14 :-

Cmde Ray D’Souza (Retd)	President
Cmde Fali Dubash (Retd)	Vice President
Cdr LS Surendra (Retd)	Secretary
Cdr HS Satyanarayana (Retd)	Treasurer

An evening get-together was organised on 19







Oct 2013 to meet the aspirations of the younger veterans who are busy with their second innings and prefer Sundays be left free. Response was good and the event was well received by the senior veterans too.

The Charter honoured a number of Octogenarians during the year. They included

Cdr NR Rao, Cdr TN Singhal, R Adm Vasanth, Capt S Prabhala, and R Adm RR Sood. Each member who achieved this milestone was presented with a specially designed Coffee Mug as a memento, and also planted a fruit tree sapling in an area specially designated as the "Veteran's Garden" in the Naval Officers' Mess, Bangalore.

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## Pune Charter

Navy Foundation Pune Charter has been having regular meetings.

**17 Mar 2013:** The youngest lady present, Mrs Shruti Rawat was requested to felicitate Admiral Nadkarni and Capt. Duggal being senior veterans above 80 years.



Thereafter Admiral Nadkarni was requested to felicitate Rear Admiral P.D. Sharma, founder President, RLSS (Rashtriya Life Saving Society of India) by presenting a memento. It may be noted that Rear Admiral Sharma is the first Indian to hold a Presidential position in the International Life Saving Federation.

Balance sheet for HYE 31 Mar 2013 was also presented before the audience and was approved unanimously.



**01 Sep:** The meeting was held at a lounge at Pune, for a change in ambiance, and members enjoyed themselves in the new atmosphere.

Balance sheet for HYE 30 Jun 2013 was presented and approved apart from other routine chores.

**22 Dec:** The meeting was held at RSI and Ms Madhulika Indalkar, D/o Cdr. Indalkar was felicitated for winning a Silver Medal at Special Olympics 2013 held at New Castle, Australia between 01 and 07 Dec 2013 in Single Boccie in her category. She stood sixth in doubles event.

Madhulika Indalkar with her parents and the President Pune Charter.





The audience was also appraised about the achievement by another member of the NFPC family wherein Mrs Gauri Warudi, W/o Lt Cdr Warudi received the best documentary film award for her film "Jyotirgamaya: from darkness to light" at the Woodpecker film festival on 21 Dec 2013.

A lecture and interaction with Senior Branch Manager, LIC was arranged. The members were appraised of the benefits and schemes available especially for senior citizens.

Cdr Arun Patil, from DGR was also present for the lunch to appraise, members regarding various opportunities.



Vice Admiral Suresh Bangara gave a talk on bridging the gap between defence and civilian population.

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## Hyderabad Charter

A get-together of all members of the Navy Foundation, Hyderabad Charter with their spouses and serving Officers in Station was organised on 23rd December 2012 followed by Lunch. It was a nice occasion to interact with all the Members and exchange views and thoughts on various matters. Large number of retired and serving Naval Officers and their wives attended.

Annual General Body Meeting with the Members of the Hyderabad Charter was conducted on 7th April 2013. 120 Members attended the Meeting along with their wives. During the Meeting, information received from various organisations on various matters was disseminated to the Members. Copies of Quarterdeck 2013 were distributed to the Members. Balance Sheets for the Financial Year 2012-13 were presented and the points raised by the Members were discussed and the Balance Sheets were passed.

Golf Tournament consisting of 10 Teams from

Army, Navy and the Air Force Units at Hyderabad including Teams from Navy Foundation, Hyderabad Charter was organised on 24th March 2013. On completion of Tournament, Lunch was hosted for all the participants.

Meeting with the Members of Navy Foundation, Hyderabad Charter was conducted at RSI Secunderabad on 29th September 2013. 118 Members along with their wives attended the Meeting. During the Meeting, information received on various matters was disseminated to the Members. On completion of the Meeting, Drinks and Lunch was organised for the participants.

Commander Anup Kumar Haldar (01762B) passed away on 26th June 2013 due to Cancer. Secretary Navy Foundation, Hyderabad Charter visited the family within two hours of the incident and provided all possible help and assistance.



## Western Naval Command

**INSV Mhadei Reception.** On 06 Apr 2013, Lt Cdr Abhilash Tomy and his iconic boat INSV Mhadei wrote a new chapter in India's rich Maritime history by becoming the first Indian to Circumnavigate the Earth under sails; Solo, Nonstop and unassisted. The boat and her lone skipper sailed out of Mumbai on 01 Nov 2012 to undertake a voyage no Indian had attempted before and few had dreamt of. In fact so far less than 80 people in the world have successfully completed such a voyage. To commemorate the outstanding feat the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherji, Admiral DK Joshi, Chief of the Naval Staff, FO C-in-C, West and host of dignitaries and senior officials had assembled at Gateway of India. The President of India while felicitating him said, "I congratulate and warmly welcome Abhilash Tomy on behalf of the people and the Government of India. It is a proud moment for us. His epic voyage has placed our nation in the ranks of a few select countries whose citizens have been successful in braving such an arduous voyage." He further added, "This rare achievement – the first by an Indian seafarer- showcases the spirit of determination, resolve and courage."



**FOMAG Change Over** Rear Admiral G Ashok Kumar, took over reins of Maharashtra and Gujarat naval area as FOMAG on 19 Aug 13 from Rear Admiral Karambir Singh.



**IONS – 2013.** The Western Naval Command hosted the IONS – 2013 (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium) preparatory workshop and operational seminar – 2013 at Mumbai from 10 – 13 Sep 2013. Delegates from 29 Indian Ocean littoral navies participated in the three day seminar. The theme for the seminar was "Role and expectations of emerging navies in cooperative engagement for peace and stability in IOR".

**NHQ Reserve Vehicle Shed.** A shed for the vehicles procured for NHQ was inaugurated by Vice Admiral Paras





Nath, Controller of Logistics at Material Organisation, Mumbai on 05 Oct 12.



**Inauguration of Vikramaditya Cell.** An automated storage and retrieval system for Vikramaditya was inaugurated by Cmde Pradeep Joshi, Material Superintendent and Cdr K Sunilsha, Project Officer at Material Organisation, Mumbai on 05 Jul 2013.

**Maritime Seminar.** The second Maritime Seminar on 'Fostering Co-operation between Sea Faring Communities' was conducted by MWC (MBI) on 02 May 2013. The Seminar was jointly conducted by IN (Indian Navy), IMF (Indian Maritime Foundation) and NI (Nautical Institute, India, West). The aim of the Seminar was to provide a forum for interaction amongst the seafaring communities for better understanding and co-operation at sea.

## Visits to Karwar



Vice Admiral SK Sinha FOC-in-C (West) on 20 – 22 Sep 12



Shri V Umesh, IAS, Principal Secretary to Govt of Karnataka visit on 29 – 30 Oct 12.



Lt Gen AK Singh, GOC-in-C (South) visit on 22 Jan 13



Rear Admiral A K Karve  
FOC Western Fleet visit 24 Jun 13



**Western Fleet Visits Porbandar.** INS Tarkash and INS Talwar visit Porbandar IN GMB Jetty on 13 Jun 2013.



INS Barhamaputra is the first ship to berth at IN GMB jetty on 10 Jun 2013.



**Visit of FOMAG.** R Adm KB Singh, Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra and Gujarat Naval Area visited Dwarka II on 06 Aug 2013.



**Chinese Navy Hospital Ship Visits Mumbai.** PLA Navy Hospital Ship ARK Peace was on a visit to Mumbai from 06 to 12 Aug 2013. The ship is commanded by Capt Yu Dapeng. The ship has a crew of 413 personnel. Rear Admiral Shen Hao, Deputy COS, East Sea Fleet was embarked onboard as Mission Cdr. During the ship's stay, the senior officers



of PLA Navy called on Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief and other senior officers of Western Naval Command. The Indian Navy and PLA Navy have come a long way in institutionalising the defence relationship between the two countries.



**Wreath Laying Ceremony-INS Sindhurakshak.** A solemn wreath laying ceremony for six crew of INS Sindhurakshak, who lost their lives on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013, was held at INHS Asvini on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013. The crew was identified through DNA profiling. Wreaths were laid by Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, Flag Officer Commanding – in – Chief, Western Naval Command, the Commodore Commanding Submarines (West) and the Commanding Officer of INS Sindhurakshak. Several senior naval officers and men of the Western Naval Command were also present, and paid their respects with floral tributes. The ceremony was conducted with full military honours. The families and close relatives of the



crew, who had come from their home towns, were also present.

### NWWA News

Kala Kendra successfully conducted classes/ activities, such as; Aerobics, Art & Craft, Bharatnatyam, Guitter, Keyboard, Violin, Hindustani vocal music, Yoga, etc. It also organised tutions in Maths, science and Hindi both for children and ladies.

Sahara/Sakhi Group conducted regular counselling and extended all possible assistance to all ladies who approached the Centre. Sanchar Group regularly published its Newsletters to share views, happenings and experiences and publish articles of relevance and interest to the naval families of Mumbai.

Sankalp Group runs a special School for children who are differently-abled. The aim of the school is to integrate and rehabilitate these special children with the society. Many VIPs and dignitaries visited the School, among them were Mrs Bigel, wife of Admiral Murat E Bigel, CNS Turkey on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and Mrs Sandhya Sharma, wife of Mr Shashikant Sharma, Defence Secretary on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012. Annual Sports day was conducted on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 and the Annual Day on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013 which was presided over by FO C-in-C, West and Mrs Mona Sinha, President NWWA (WR)



# Eastern Naval Command

## First Boeing P-8I Aircraft



Indian Naval Aviation received a major fillip with the arrival of the first of eight Boeing P-8I Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance and Anti Submarine Warfare aircraft at Naval Air Station *Rajali*, Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu on 15 May 2013. Vice Admiral Bimal Verma, Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command presided over the event.

## INAS 312 (Tu 142m) Silver Jubilee



INAS 312, the Maritime Reconnaissance Squadron, based at INS Rajali, Arakkonam, celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of TU 142 M aircraft on 18 Nov 2013. The Silver Jubilee

celebrations of operations of the TU 142M 'Albatross' aircraft included a Seminar on Maritime Operations on 17 Nov 2013. Vice Admiral (Retd) Dilip Deshpande, himself a member of the Commissioning Crew, delivered the key note address at the Seminar. Six TU 142 M aircraft gracefully formed the backdrop at the ceremonial Divisions reviewed by Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, FO C-in-C, East.



## Submarine Arihant – Taming the Atom



In the early hours of 10 Aug 2013, first criticality of Reactor was achieved onboard the Nuclear Submarine, Arihant. Successful achievement of this major milestone speaks volumes about the extraordinary effort put in by the ATVP, SBC



and the Crew, and also the excellent teamwork and synergy with external organisations.

### US Secretary of Navy Visits ENC



Mr. Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy, United States of America was at Visakhapatnam on a one-day visit to the Eastern Naval Command on 11 May 2013. The Secretary visited the Headquarters, Eastern Naval Command and held discussions with Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, FO C-in-C, East on matters of mutual interest.

### Navy's Advanced Jet Trainer Aircraft



The Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral DK Joshi, inducted the Hawk 132, a fourth generation Advanced Jet Trainer aircraft into the Navy, on 06 Nov 2013 at an impressive ceremony held at Naval Air Station, INS Dega.

### AMPHEX 2013



Amphibious Exercise 2013 was conducted on the Western Seaboard (off Karwar) in Jan – Feb 2013. The exercise was on a large scale with representation from all the three services. Army troops and assets ex-91 Infantry Brigade, SU 30 and Jaguar from IAF and a large number of Naval units participated in the Exercise, including integral helicopters, Sea Harriers and MiG 29 Ks.







## Overseas Deployment - Eastern Fleet

The Eastern Fleet ships comprising a SNF, frigate, corvette and a tanker participated in Rajdoot 2013, and proceeded to South China Sea during May 22 – Jun 24, 2013. During the OSD, the ships traversed a cumulative distance of 7,227 nm while being underway for 558 hours. This deployment helped in strengthening the bridges of friendship, enhancing interoperability with these friendly countries and fulfilling an important aspect of diplomatic role of the *IN*.



## SIMBEX 2013

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the India-Singapore bilateral Naval exercise, SIMBEX 2013 was conducted from May 18 – 23, 2013 in two phases. The Indian Navy was represented by one Shivalik Class, one Corvette and one Dornier aircraft, whilst the Republic of Singapore Navy was represented by two ships, one submarine, one Fokker 50, one Lear jet, one fighter aircraft and one helicopter. The exercise included replenishment at sea, surface shoots and anti submarine warfare.



## PASSEX/Bilateral Exercises

The Eastern Fleet undertook Passage Exercise with the navies of Malaysia, Vietnam and Philippines, and made port calls at Port Kelang in Malaysia, Da Nang in Vietnam and Manila in Philippines.

## IFR at Sydney, Australia

A Shivalik class frigate was deployed to participate in the IFR at Sydney from October 05 – 10, 2013. During the OSD, the ship visited Fremantle, Jervis Bay, Sydney and Surabaya (Indonesia). The IFR included the participation of a large number of countries.



Sahyadri at Sydney Harbour



Marching Contingent at Sydney

### Sailors Forum



The General Body Meeting of Veteran Sailors Forum, Visakhapatnam Charter functioning under the aegis of Headquarters Eastern Naval Command was held at Sailor's Institute on 06 Oct 2013. Rear Admiral Pradeep Rana, Chief Staff Officer (Personnel and Administration) chaired the meeting.

### Change Of Fleet Commander



R Adm Ajit Kumar, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, handed over the command of the Eastern Fleet, to R Adm Atul Kumar Jain at an impressive ceremony held on 16 Aug 2013 onboard the Flag Ship, INS Jalashwa.

### Change of ASD (V)



R Adm AK Saxena, took over as Admiral Superintendent, Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam from R Adm GS Pabby, at a ceremony held at the Naval Dockyard on 11 Sep 2013.

### ENC Football Team Champons



The Indian Navy Football Championship 2012-13 was held from 22-25 Jan 2013. The Championship was conducted at Eastern Naval Command. Teams from the Eastern, Western and Southern Naval Commands participated in the event in which ENC Team



emerged as the winner. R Adm Ajit Kumar P, Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Fleet was the Chief Guest at the event.

### INS Sindhuvir Silver Jubilee



INS Sindhuvir commissioned into the Indian Navy on 11 Jun 1988 celebrated its silver jubilee on 11 Jun 2013. Over last 25 years the submarine has reaffirmed her stature as a frontline platform and was awarded the Chief of the Naval Staff, Unit Citation for outstanding performance in the year 2011-2012.

### Widow's Hostel



Widow's hostel at Nausena Baug was inaugurated by Mrs. Ragini Chopra, President, NWWA (ER) on 05 Aug 2013.

### 'Sankalp' 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary



'Sankalp', the Navy School for Special Children, run by NWWA (ER) celebrated its 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary at Samudrika, Naval Auditorium on 31 Jan 2013. Vice Admiral Vijay Kumar Namballa, Director General Naval Projects, Visakhapatnam, was the Chief Guest for the event.

### Family Clinics at Visakhapatnam



Clean Naval area campaign was carried out by SHO at Eastern Naval Command. On this occasion, in order to augment the Medicare services to the families in naval residential areas, Mrs. Ragini Chopra, President NWWA, (ER) presented various life saving equipment to the Family Clinics on 16 Apr 2013 at the event conducted at Community Hall at Nausena Baugh.



## Southern Naval Command

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### Admiral Hiranandani Trophy

The first ever Vice Admiral GM Hiranandani Rolling Trophy was received by Lieutenant Commander Abhishek Yadav from Smt Susheel Hiranandani, the spouse of late Vice Admiral Hiranandani at a memorable function held at the Maritime Warfare Centre, Kochi. The trophy instituted in the memory of the Late Vice Admiral GM Hiranandani by the Hiranandani family, is awarded for the best performance among all officers undergoing specialization in various disciplines of tactics and operations in the Navy. Lieutenant Commander Abhishek Yadav was undergoing specialization in Anti-Submarine Warfare. Rear Admiral G Ashok Kumar, Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command who spoke on the occasion, exhorted the young officers present to be inspired by the example of late Vice Admiral Hiranandani. Commodore G Prakash, Director of Maritime Warfare Centre conducted the ceremony.

Vice Admiral Gulab Mohanlal Hiranandani joined the Indian Navy in 1949, and retired as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff in 1989. The Admiral was the Fleet Operations Officer of the Western Fleet in 1971, when they conducted the daring attack on Karachi. Vice Admiral Hiranandani has also served as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command from 1985 to 1987 and a member of Union Public Service Commission post retirement. In 1995, the Admiral commenced the important task of recording the official Indian Naval history and authored three authoritative volumes, the last of which was completed just a few hours before his death in September 2009. His final years were spent at Malakkara

near Chengannur in Kerala with his son Dr Manik Hiranandani. His daughter Meera Sanyal is a banker and social activist.



Lieutenant Commander Abhishek Yadav receiving Admiral Hiranandani Rolling Trophy.

### Non Stop National Cycling Record

Three Officers undergoing training at Southern Naval Command established a new national record for nonstop cycling. The Officers Sub Lieutenant Yogesh Tiwari, Sub Lieutenant Rajanikant Yadav and Sub Lieutenant Deepak Joseph cycled nonstop from INS Venduruthy at Kochi to INS Rajali at Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu and back covering a distance of 1423 Km in 94 hours. The feat achieved on 27th April 2013, was flagged off from Kochi on 23rd April 2013 by Captain O Johnson, Director of Center for Leadership and Behavioural Studies at Southern Naval Command. The previous national record is for a distance of 1200 Km covered in 76 hours and 10 minutes. Limca Book of Records has been contacted for authentication of the record. Cochin Bicycle Club was also associated with the expedition.



### **Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, Vikrant Launched**

Shri AK Antony, Raksha Mantri and other dignitaries witnessed the launch of the first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, Vikrant at Cochin Shipyard Ltd, Kochi. Smt. Elizabeth Antony, wife of Shri AK Antony launched Vikrant amidst the chanting of Vedic verses. Admiral DK Joshi, Chief of the Naval Staff, FO C-in-C, Western Naval Command, FO C-in-C, Southern Naval Command, Shri AK Antony, Defence Minister,



Shri GK Vasan, Union Minister for Shipping and Commodore (Retd.) K Subramaniam Chairman and Managing Director, Cochin Shipyard Ltd. witnessed the impressive ceremony.

### **Aviation Simulators**

Two state of the art simulators - The Flight and Tactical Simulator (FATS) for Seaking helicopters and the Water Survival Training Facility (WSTF) for aircrew were





commissioned at Kochi - the home of Navy's training command. Vice Admiral Satish Soni, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command inaugurated the twin facilities, housed at INS Garuda Navy's Air Station at Kochi. The Admiral paid homage at the Seaking memorial built at the premises of FATS prior to the event. Speaking on the occasion, FO C-in-C, South said that such facilities help in reducing accident rates and asked the crew to focus on proper maintenance so that the facilities can be utilized for many years.

The FATS is designed for Pilots and Observers of Seaking helicopters for initial, and periodic training, as well as evaluation of new procedures and tactics. The real life simulator built from ground up with inputs from over 110 Navy personnel and 200 engineers from M/s HALBIT and M/s ELBIT, is a PC based system with glass cockpit, collimated visuals, and an electro pneumatic system with six degrees of freedom and motion. The simulator is a roll-on/

roll-off system wherein other aircraft cockpits can also be inserted in lieu and flown. The simulator can factor in all scenarios encountered by a Navy pilot including deck landings on different warships, various emergencies, and night flying. Commander Winston Mathew is the Officer-in-Charge of the FATS.

### **INS Sunayna Commissioned**

INS Sunayna, the second of the NOPV (Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel) class of ship was commissioned at Kochi by Vice Admiral Satish Soni, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command. The 2250 Tonnes Sunayna, to be based at Kochi under Southern Naval Command was built at Goa Shipyard Limited, and is designed to undertake fleet support operations, coastal and offshore patrolling, ocean surveillance and monitoring of Sea Lines of Communications and offshore assets, and escort duties. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Admiral Soni said that the

shipbuilding process continues to be one of the most challenging tasks starting from design to integration of diverse equipment prior to final setting to work and delivery of a seaworthy combat platform. The Admiral complimented Goa Shipyard Limited and all agencies behind the building of INS Sunayna. He also reminded the audience that India's location makes the country a pivot around which activities of the strategically important Indian Ocean would unfold. Platforms such as Sunayna would enable the



Vice Admiral Satish Soni, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, flying the inaugural session on FATS.



Indian Navy to secure the national interests in the region.

Two KOEL/Pielstick Diesel engines propel INS Sunayna and enable it to achieve speeds in excess of 25 knots. The ship also has an automatic power management system installed by M/s Larsen and Toubro. She is fitted with the latest Navigation, Communication and Electronic Support Systems. The armament fit include one 76 mm Gun, Close in Weapon Systems and CHAFF launchers. INS Sunayna can also carry an ALH or Chetak helicopter. Commander Aftab Ahmed Khan, the Commanding Officer of the ship leads a crew of 8 officers and 108 sailors.



Earlier on arrival, Vice Admiral Satish Soni was accorded a Guard of Honour and was then introduced to the ship's crew. Vice Admiral KR Nair, Controller Warship Production and Acquisition, IHQ, MoD (Navy), Rear Admiral (Retd) Vineet Bakshi, Chairman and Managing Director, Goa Shipyard Limited and a host of dignitaries attended the event.

### **Water Survival Training Facility**

The Water Survival Training Facility (WSTF) built at a cost of Rs 20 Crore will provide realistic training to aircrew for escape from a ditched aircraft under varied simulated conditions and crash scenarios. The facility, the first of its kind in India has state of the art Survival Training Simulation Theatre (STST) with several components. The Helicopter Underwater Escape Trainer and the Cockpit Underwater Escape Trainer of the STST trains the crew in escaping from a submerged aircraft. The

Parachute Disengagement and Drag Trainer provide a realistic experience in water entry while descending on a parachute to the sea. Rescue Hoist Trainer of the STST as the name suggests, provides the aircrew rescue procedures and techniques while being rescued. The Environment Simulator Equipment simulates various conditions of aircraft accidents such as day, night, rain, heavy seas, low visibility, wind, thunder and lightning. The WSTF has been set up by Survival Systems India, Mumbai. Commander Satish is the Officer-in-Charge of the facility.

The WSTF is being built at Garuda. The contract was signed on 22 Feb 2011 at a cost of Rs. 20.2 crores. The facility is intended to be used by aircrew and marine commandos for escape drills from various aircraft under different environmental conditions and crash scenarios. The work on the project commenced in Nov 2011 and presently the ground and first floor has been completed.



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