

Fauji India

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**AgustaWestland
case, where to?**



The COAS Controversy shows need for reform in Army

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Usually Correct!** pg 09

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'Cruise'** pg 55

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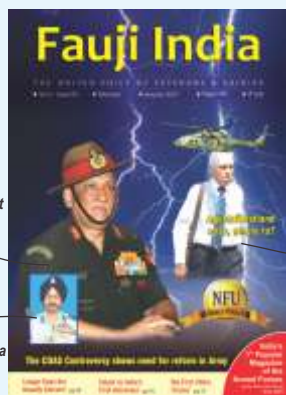
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From the Editor-at-Large



The last month of 2016 was hectic for the armed forces with quite some important events unfolding. The announcement of Army's new chief has led to debates within the service fraternity and in the media. While the bypassing of the senior most has led questions by many even as it was justified by some, the naming of the new Air Force chief was as expected and thus there was no controversy. However, a common element to the appointment of both chiefs was that they rose from the positions of Vice-Chief.

Even as the Govt grapples with the fallout of this decision, the grapevine has it that he may be given the Chief of Defence (CDS) position. But then, the issue of CDS itself is vexing the Govt as more than the announcing the appointment, the challenge is to find a suitable charter of duties for the CDS. Ironically, the political leadership has time and again politicised the very same institution that it wants to keep apolitical and one on which it so heavily depends for furthering our nation's security!

The arrest of former Air Chief SP Tyagi by CBI in the AgustaWestland case had its own ups and down. It brought to the fore the damage this has done to the institution of service chiefs. For the services, this episode reflects the politico-bureaucratic nexus to target those outside their ilk, at the cost of the armed forces. It is for the first time in India's history that a service chief was arrested and that too without conclusive proof, when it was clear that the finger of suspicion also pointed on others. It is a sad commentary on civil-military relations. Though out on bail, the real beneficiaries of the largesse are yet to be established.

Amidst all this brouhaha, there was a rainbow for the Faujis: Non-Functional Upgradation (NFU) has seen light of the day. In a recent case on NFU by few army officers, the Principal Bench of AFT gave a ruling in favour of the appellants. However, some sections are saying that the Govt may appeal against it. If NFU comes in effect, it will settle, after a long time, that much desired demand of the officers of the armed forces to bring them at par with their civilian counterparts.

It would also be pertinent for the MoD to refrain from appealing against judgments of AFT in Supreme Court, or else AFTs would lose their relevance and the faith of Faujis looking upto it for justice. And though the Raksha Mantri has been drilling this sense into his flock of civilians, it would be expeditious on part of the MoD and Ministry of Personnel to look into the many cases of pay and pensions languishing in their red-taped files. In tune with the quest of good governance, the agenda of the present government should find echo in action too.

Mention must also be made of the Army's confidence building measures in the Kashmir Valley, which seem to be showing results on the ground. This combined with de(re)monitisation, has led to the Valley's local leaders running out of cash to fuel petty street shows. Thus locals are returning to fold, kids back to school, tourism gaining currency and normalcy returning till the separatists get on to some new stunts.

It was a historic moment for Team Fauji India to have a luncheon tête-à-tête with India's first spaceman Wg Cdr Rakesh Sharma (Retd). He shared his journey of life, noteworthy being a biopic being made on him to be released in 2018 that is being timed with the release of his autobiography. Indeed, this Fauji has brought international acclaim and remains an inspiration to all Indians for his path-breaking feat.

Finally do keep sending us your feedback and suggestions as we continue our journey fighting for the men who fight for the country.

JAI HIND!

Maroof Raza



Monthly

January 2017

Fauji India

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COVER STORY

The COAS Controversy Shows Need for Reform In Army

LT GEN HS PANAG



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CMDE RANJIT RAI



Salyut to India's First Astronaut

SAGAT SHAUNIK

A Veteran's Struggle to get TS scale

MAJOR GURDEEP SAMRA



Reflections on the Loss of my Fauji son

MEGHNA GIRISH

The Army Officer and his Corporate Wife

CDR VIKRAM KARVE



Reflections on the Year Gone By

LT COL NOEL ELLIS



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Letters to Editor



Veteran Subscriber Passes Away, Fond Reader of 'Fauji India'

This is to inform you of the sad demise of my husband Wg Cdr TSR Swami (Retd) 140943 (subscription No), on 19-07-2016. He was 86 years old and suffering from multiple problems but the end was peaceful.

He was very fond of reading 'Fauji India' magazine and used to often quote articles from it. Your magazine gave him lots of happiness in his last days and I am grateful to you and your magazine for the same.

- Mrs Syamala Sitarama Swami, w/o Wg Cdr TSR Swami

Email: parvativardhini@yahoo.com

Team 'Fauji India' sends heartfelt condolences on his demise and pray for his soul to rest in eternal peace in heavenly abode.

SSCOs - Backbone of Military

This refers to the article 'Short Service Officers can serve Several National Needs' by Brig PT Gangadharan published in December 2016 issue of your magazine.

Brig Gangadharan has described in detail the reasons for release of SS officers after serving for 5 - 14 years since the need of the army is to keep it young for fighting battles and to win wars. This is unlike other services where one can continue till the age of 60 years or even more.

Brig Gangadharan has also described SSCOs as the 'Backbone of the Army' and the importance of taking care of these officers after their release. He has also emphasised the enrolment of SSCOs in ECHS.

The case of enrolling SSCOs in ECHS is pending with the government for a long time. Though RM and MOD are supporting this enrolment, the final orders for the same have still not been issued.

SSCO fraternity awaits the government approval of this matter of enrolling these SSC officers in ECHS, anxiously at the earliest.

- Capt Kuldeep Khara, Veteran

Advice from a Veteran to New Army Chief

Dear Lt Gen Bipin Rawat,

You may recall a historical event when Lt Gen Nathu Singh told Pandit Nehru when he was offered to be the C-in-C of India – "Gen KM Cariappa is senior and it is his privilege." History is made by such people and not by Vaidyas. Coming generations will remember you from inner core of their heart.

Here is a DFA for PM from you: "Feel honoured by your suggestion of my promotion. However, it is likely to seep in a tradition of sycophancy, in the Indian Armed Forces the only island of hope in the ocean of misery of India."

This practice is likely to sow the seed for politicizing the Indian Armed Forces and when the coming generations wish to spit on some one's face let it not be mine. As an infantry man and Gorkha I shall be there to render my services to the Chief as member of his team. Let the tradition of Indian Army be kept alive to honour the memory of great superseded soldiers Lt Gen PS Bhagat VC and Lt Gen SK Sinha.

"I sincerely believe that 'Man Does Not Live By Bread Alone'. My profound apology Mr Modi but my conscience does not permit me to supersede my colleagues and comrades in arms. I am prepared to resign for your face saving." JAI HIND! Bipin Rawat.

- Brig Mulk Raj (Retd)

This DFA was sent by Brig Mulk Raj in email to COAS designate Lt Gen Bipin Rawat on 20th Dec 2016. Brig Mulk Raj commanded 5 PARA and was part the team that successfully scaled Mt Everest in 1965 led by Capt (IN) MS Kohli.

The Politicians & 'Made in India' Choppers

Reading the hullabaloo of the chopper scandal made me realise that the one who wields the least influence to strike a deal, has his name flashing about, whilst no names from MoD, IAS, NSG are flashed.

The real culprits irrespective of the political party, still influence the Parliament. Another Bofors like cloud rising, another dog catching its tail.

Proves one thing for sure – MoDs DPP is a sham and a scam. It, at best, unarms the forces whilst doing nothing to curtail or remove the corruption.

Single point solution to this... That one solution is to making VVIPs adhere to their own formula. Fly the VVIPs in HAL and DRDO made machines!

HAL boasts of their produce as the finest. Dhruv for example, for which HAL boasts of its ceiling height. Indigenisation and “Make in India” which have been thrust upon the Indian air, land and sea warrior, should be adapted for the VVIPs too.

If the armed forces have been 'disarmed' making the men and women in uniform lack technological advancement to fight the nation's war just to suit indigenisation, the 'Mantris' too can do their bit for the upliftment of HAL and DRDO.

For about 50 years from now, HAL made Dornier can host a decent cabin space and once again the 'Mantris' can travel in these. By then, the Saras should be ready with a Mark 1 and can then be the official “India 1”.

Dhruvs can hoist the PM in peace time to Siachen as HAL is confident of it fighting a war at that envelope. All anomalies of Saras Mark 1 and Dhruvs for VVIPs brought up by SPG, NSG can be adapted in Mark I-A.

Till then, just as the air force is raising a Squadron of the Tejas Mark 1, which cannot fight a war, a squadron of Dhruvs and Saras Mark 1 will fly the VVIPs.

It might just make our MoD answerable or better still, quiet while the ruffles within HAL and DRDO will be heard far and wide.

Solves the corruption issue too and perhaps even make the armed forces smile as their point of HAL's/ DRDO production professionalism will prove itself.

It might also solve the problem the magnitude of VVIPs India is burdened with, by a sudden decline of VVIPs, by facing the realities of HAL's produces whilst some opting out of the VVIP status to safeguard one's life.

- Sqn Ldr Parvez Rustom Jamasji, VrC (Retd)

Chief of Defense Staff (CDS): An Elusive Concept?

It appears that Generals have risen in defence of their own stars. As Arun Shourie remarked at USI years back, to name one General who has resigned for the betterment of the Service and Junior Officers and Jawans. Not one General in the audience rose to contradict

If the government decision is wrong or unacceptable, have the two C-in-Cs put in their papers, in the highest tradition left behind by the British. Why they are hoping for post of CDS? Prima facie they are not right fit for the job.

Whatever be the merits and the demerits of RMs speak, the fact is inter-services integration must happen at the top formations. Air Force has publicly said so, that without that CDS is not acceptable to them which would take 10 years. If CDS works on incremental basis, it would never deliver in the next 50 years. ECHS is a recent case in point.

CDS is meaningless unless Integrated Theatre Commands happen simultaneously. CDS would have to ensure that country remains safe during the transition which has not been spoken so far.

Whatever may be the case, Air Chief Marshal, should have not accepted any quid-quo-pro if any, and should have put in his papers. At least he knew or should have known what was happening.

Armed police for fighting insurgency and terrorism, was not constituted as a new young force to be commanded by serving army officers with a serving General in MHA taking charge. So many uniformed and civilians would have not lost their lives which continues to happen.

- Commander Prem P Batra (Retd)

NFU Granted! First Strike in Fight Against Inequitable Status



In what could be the first in line of many victories in our crusade for fair treatment, the granting of the Non-Functional Upgrade (NFU) for armed forces officers, is a landmark judgment that has, somewhere, assuaged the resentment simmering amongst the military fraternity, humiliated at the down-gradation before and one-upmanship by, the civil bureaucracy. It also bears testimony to the apolitical spirit of our armed forces, who did not turn their back on the sanctified non-violent and judicial remedies empowered by our Constitution – unlike our neighbour whose military has shown brazen disregard for democratic ideals.

by Staff Correspondent



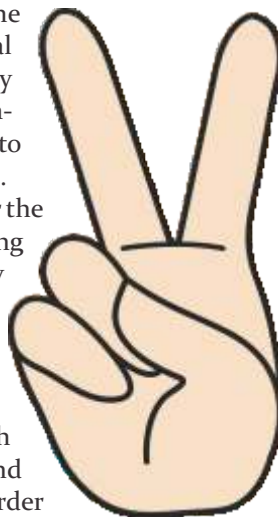
This is the first, but we certainly hope it is not the last. In something that marks the tide turning against the civil bureaucracy for all their wicked tactics to deprive the services of every rightful due, perk and pay, the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) Principal Bench in New Delhi ruled military officers to also be eligible for Non-Functional Upgrade (NFU), in response to a petition filed by a serving army Colonel.

This has served as a massive balm for the enormous discontent in the Fauj following a slew of decisions that prevented many pay and service benefits from accruing to the army, navy and air force – beginning with the truncated form of the OROP and the down-gradation before the civil services by the Seventh Central Pay Commission (7CPC). And what's more, the celebration over the order is also not short lived since there is no scope for the order's reversal i.e. the AFT has barred the Union of India from appealing against the verdict in a higher court.

On 23 December 2016, the entire armed forces fraternity was euphoric, with the army's Col Mukul

Dev becoming a household name in every military station – naval, air, operational or peace posting. Convincing the bench headed by Lt Gen Sanjiv Langer and Justice BP Katakey that armed forces are also a 'Group A' service – since it meets all the six criteria to qualify it as one – and drawing its attention to the low morale and resentment in the rank and file, Col Rajiv Manglik (Retd), Col Dev's counsel also contended the services too should benefit from the NFU's purpose of alleviating 'stagnation' in service – and not to equate monetary benefits. The hearings in the case, where Col Dev of the JAG Branch is one of co-petitioners amongst 170-odd army officers, had been reserved for judgment a few weeks back, after the arguments by the both the petitioners and the respondents had concluded.

NFU, that was recommended by the 6CPC in 2006 and implemented in 2008 during the UPA rule, involved IAS and other 'Group A' service officers to receive the pay scale of the highest promoted officer of their batch, in case they fail to get promoted to the subsequent rank. The hiked pay scale is granted two years after their batchmates are



promoted and superseded the non-promoted officer. It was certainly a heartburn for many of us to see officers from a 'cylindrical' system of service progression, where promotion to the next rank is almost guaranteed, getting an elevated pay-scale of a higher rank after seeing their careers end at a lower rank. But not for an armed forces officer who probably might hand up his boots at the 3rd rank or the 4th rank itself, owing to a 'pyramidal' hierarchy where many officers fall by the wayside since not everyone necessarily makes it to the next rank. This is not to mention the far greater danger to life and limb from the occupational hazard standpoint.

The NFU will now be applicable with effect from 01 January 2006, with arrears for NFU allowed for not more than three years from the date of judgment. Thus, following are the implications of the NFU order:

- Pay of all service officers who were serving on January 1, 2006 will be revised based on the NFU.
- Veteran officers who retired post January 1, 2006 will also get the benefit of NFU because their pay (and hence pension) will be revised with effect from January 1, 2016.
- Also, veterans, who retired before January 1, 2006 will also get the benefit of NFU after the next equalization of the OROP is processed.

“We contended that service officers' morale has been lowered by the government by non-grant of the NFU and thus lowering the established status of the

armed forces officers since Independence. We also argued that the stagnation in the armed forces is more acute than the civil services and that the denial is in clear violation of Article 14 and 16 of the Constitution 'as the equals since independence have been made unequals'. We also dispelled the misconception about the 'Military Service Pay' (MSP) that is often thrown as a reason to withhold NFU. We explained that NFU's

purpose is to alleviate the acute stagnation in service, whereas the MSP and other allowances are to meet service hazards in inhospitable terrain and living conditions. Attention was also drawn to the other services like the Indian Legal Service, Indian Trade Service, Indian Statistical service, Indian Economic service and Central Information Service which do not meet all the

parameters to be called a 'Group A' service but have still been awarded NFU,” said Col Mandlik, while speaking to 'Fauji India'.

While the cause behind the bureaucracy's beef with the armed forces is best known to them, another message delivered to both the political leadership and intelligentsia is the armed forces' unquestionable submission before sacrosanct democratic values espoused by our founding fathers. Almost every successive government had been wary of empowering the armed forces beyond a point, fearing they might take after their counterparts in Pakistan whose coup-fascination has brought the country to where it is now.■

“The petitioner had contended that the morale of officers of the armed forces has been lowered by the government by non-grant of the NFU and thus lowering the established status of the armed forces officers since independence.”



Uncle Sam's foreign policy of Merry-go-round

'Langar Gups' Are Usually Correct!



In countries like Pakistan, where the elected representatives are mortally scared of the powerful army that can maneuver a military take-over in a jiffy, it is standard for the elected elite to weigh all consequences till nearly the last date. But in democracies, such things do not and must not happen. Therefore, the only conclusion is that the leaders and their advisers are up to no good. Announcing that Gen Bipin Rawat will be the next Chief of the Army, superseding two General officers senior to him, smacks of both arrogance and stupidity on the part of the present government.

by Lt General Vijay Oberoi (Retd)



For the uninitiated, 'Langar Gups' are rumours in the army that emanate from Messes, where uniformed persons gather and discuss issues pertaining to the military in general and the army in particular. Although 'Langar' refers to Jawans' Messes, the term generally refers to discussions where officers, JCO's and Jawans congregate and 'shoot the breeze'!

For over a month and more, when the appointment of a new army chief was not announced, speculation started and evolved into *Langar Gups*, with all kinds of permutations and combinations emerging. Many claimed inside knowledge about who will be the next chief and the rank and file, besides being perturbed as to why the announcement was not forthcoming, rightly smelt that the powers that be were up to some hanky-panky! The startling news about the appointment that was announced on December 17 confirmed it.

Generally, appointments of new incumbents at the higher levels of the armed forces are announced two to three months in advance. This is because unlike the police, bureaucracy and others, the armed forces' role being more sensitive, such appointments are decided much before time and thereafter filled on the stipulated dates. If this is not done, not only the contenders remain on tenterhooks, but also wrong signals are sent across the board that 'all is not well' and possibly some kind of nefarious activities are in the offing.

In the last few months unfortunately, even

Headquarters Command remained headless over months and hence it was clear to the discerning that the politico-bureaucratic combine was up to some tricks! The announcements of the new army and air chiefs at such a late stage have confirmed such misgivings.

In countries like Pakistan, where the elected representatives are mortally scared of the powerful army that can maneuver a military take-over in a jiffy, it is standard for the elected elite to weigh all consequences till nearly the last date. But in democracies, such things do not and must not happen. Therefore, the only conclusion is that the leaders and their advisers are up to no good.

Announcing that Gen Bipin Rawat will be the next army chief, superseding two General Officers senior to him, smacks of both arrogance and stupidity on the part of the present government. Let me clarify that giving lame excuses of operational experience or lack of it does not cut ice with veterans like me who are experienced and are 'au fait' with the tricks of governments. For the uninitiated, please note that officers are posted to appointments in accordance with well laid out systems based on their profiles, and no one opts for so-called 'operational appointments' or otherwise. It is all the luck of the draw and when officers become army chiefs, they all are professionally the best, otherwise they would not have reached such exalted heights.

In my considered view, it is more important to have

a full tenure as an army chief and not a truncated one of a few months to command the world's third largest army. Commanding at various levels up the chain adds to one's experience as a professional, but it will only be naïve persons who will place experience of commanding an army lower than commanding units and formations at subordinate levels.

No doubt it is the prerogative of the government of the day to appoint whoever they consider meets their criteria, but governments usually think many times before grossly interfering with what has generally been happening in the past. Trotting out excuses justifying their actions and scotching perceptions with lame excuses tend to reinforce that there was some skullduggery indeed.

Before I give my views on this episode, let me go back in time and recapitulate instances of the past where practically more harm than good ensued on account of unwarranted interference, mostly on specious (read political) grounds.

The easing out of General Thorat by the then combine of Prime Minister and Defence Minister and appointing General Thapar instead, was a case of sacrificing merit and professionalism at the altar of sycophancy that resulted in the biggest debacle for our country in 1962. The excuses now trotted out were uttered earlier too, when the highly professional and greatly admired late General SK Sinha was passed over, ostensibly for lack of operational experience, when the actual reason was that he was opposed to military action against the Punjab militants; what followed is well known. In keeping with the credo of an officer and a gentleman, he quietly resigned and went home.

Later, the same General (with less operational experience, as the government had averred!) was appointed Governor in two insurgency-infested states, which he managed adroitly and with aplomb!

Even earlier, the highly professional, highly decorated and a soldier's General – PS Bhagat – was denied his rightful appointment, based on whims and ulterior motives by another Prime Minister. In each of these cases, the political leadership succumbed to the manipulators – mostly bureaucrats, sycophants and parochial advisers.

At this stage, I need to narrate a discussion held on the sidelines of a seminar at the College of Defence

Management, Secunderabad, many years back. During a discussion I had with two cerebral military intellectuals – Gen Raghavan and Air Vice Marshal Kak – the three of us discussed the pros and cons of selecting a service chief on the basis of seniority as was the norm vis-à-vis an open-ended selection from the C's-in-C.

After weighing the issue with great deliberation, we came to the conclusion that there were more negatives in the latter, as chances of selection based on political, sycophantic and non-professional reasons may become predominant in due course – with professional and character qualities being sacrificed on account of extraneous issues. With such precedencies, even appointments of Army and Corps Commanders may meet such a fate later, throwing professionalism to the winds.

I have no quarrel with the Chief-Designate, as I hardly know him, but it is the principle that is of utmost importance. Personalities are passé, but institutions like the army are far too important to be fiddled with because of political, parochial or other considerations. We are fortunate that the nation has a highly apolitical and professionally competent army, which will continue to conduct itself with élan and pride irrespective of who leads it.

Two more points before I sign off. If the present Prime Minister continues with his dictatorial ways, like the first Prime Minister of Independent India did, without consulting advisers who would give him unbiased advice, then the nation is in big trouble. Rhetoric with modulated utterances may go down well with ignorant masses, but they are no substitute for good governance. Secondly, it is only *Modi Bhakts*, including the few still in the armed forces with their personal agendas, are quoted by the Sarkari propaganda machine and the paid media, while the bulk of the citizenry is not at all convinced.

The moot point remains that the nation and the army needs an army chief that delivers and not one who sways with the wind because he is grateful for small mercies! Let me end with the optimistic note that the new incumbent will take the army to greater heights of professionalism and pride and not succumb to blandishments and sweet words. ■



Lt Gen Vijay Oberoi (Retd), a former Vice Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army had lost his right leg in the Indo – Pak War in 1965, but he chose to soldier on in his regiment – the Maratha Light Infantry. During his over 40 years of distinguished service, he had held highly prestigious and important appointments, including that of DGMO and GOC of a Strike Corps. He was the Army Commander of two commands – the Training Command as well as the Western Command. Earlier, he had held a diplomatic assignment at Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). He was also an International Fellow at the US Army War College. A recipient of all three Distinguished Service awards, he was the Founder Director of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), a New Delhi-based 'Think Tank'. This article first appeared at thecitizen.in and reproduced here with permission of the author. He can be reached at Email: genoberoi@gmail.com

The COAS Controversy shows need for reform in Army



The government needs to ensure that senior positions in the army don't seem like they're the result of political patronage

by Lt Gen HS Panag (Retd)



Hail to the chief who in triumph advances," wrote Sir Walter Scott in 'The Lady of the Lake'. And we say the same to Lt Gen Bipin Rawat, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, who will assume the duties as the 26th Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on January 1, 2017. We hail him, salute him and support him to lead the Indian Army (IA) for the next three years to ensure external and internal security of India, to carry out much-needed structural, organisational, moral and human resource development reforms; and to influence the government to reform the higher defence management, formulate a formal National Security Strategy and the dependent Force Development Strategy. A very tall order indeed, but we hope that he will remain steadfast and succeed.

Unfortunately, Rawat begins his tenure under controversial circumstances with respect to his selection. He has 'on merit' (as decided by the government) superseded two seniors, Lt Gen Bakshi and Lt Gen Hariz. Though the principle of selection is 'merit cum seniority', seniority has been violated only once before in 1983 when Gen Vaidya superseded Lt Gen Sinha - a controversy that lingers till date. There is no doubt that it is the prerogative of the government to select the COAS based on the principle of 'merit cum seniority'. However, given the universal perception of our political culture in which merit at this level is influenced by '*political jan-pehchan*', the principle of seniority has remained pre-eminent.

The Opposition, which plays no role in the selection, raised a hue and cry, accusing the govern-

ment of parochialism and politicisation of the Armed Forces.

The opinion among the retired and serving defence officers is divided in favour of seniority and 'relative merit'. Regimental and arm loyalties also came to the fore. The government responded by specifically highlighting Rawat's relative merit vis a vis other contenders. This was needless, as given the limited knowledge of the government as far as military matters go, most arguments were easily defeated. As a result, this move only generated more controversy and suspicion. Having decided to use its prerogative of relying upon 'relative merit', the best response would have been that the government has selected the first among equals for the coveted post, without going into any further details.

There were a lot of expectations from this government for transformational reforms in respect of National Security Strategy, higher defence management, structure, organisation and stagnant modernisation of the Armed Forces. So far, the actions of the government in this regard have not inspired any confidence and are more notable for exploitation of the Armed Forces for political mileage. Political rhetoric and jingoism shown after the Special Forces raids in Myanmar and across the Line of Control are just cases in point. A halo has been put around the Armed Forces and their criticism for gross inefficiency and lapses in safeguarding their bases and installations, has been termed as anti-national.

Be that as it may, the controversial decision of the

government may be the harbinger of long overdue reforms, albeit by default, with respect to the appraisal and selection system within the Armed Forces and selection of officers for the senior appointments by the government.

All the Generals who were contenders for post of the COAS are well known to me. Some have been my students at the Indian Military Academy and Defence Services Staff College and served under my command. Others I know by reputation. All are thorough professionals, having come up through a tough pyramidal selection system – whatever be its infirmities – to become Army Commanders. Rather than examine this controversy based on their relative merit or seniority, I will focus on the analysis of the current system of selection, its shortcomings and the way forward. More so, when apart from the COAS, the government also approves all selections for promotion to the rank of Colonel and above, done by the Armed Forces. The promotion to the rank of Major General and above are approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. I will restrict the discussion to the army but the same applies to other two services with minor variations.

The Existing System

As things stand, three to four months before the retirement of the present incumbent, the Ministry of Defence calls for the dossiers of the five next senior officers or even all the Army Commanders and the Vice Chief of Army Staff. No formal recommendations are sought from the COAS, but at times, informal inputs may be taken by the Raksha Mantri (RM). The file is then prepared by the dealing Joint Secretary who carries out a comparative analysis of merit, based on the dossiers. The file goes up the chain to the Defence Secretary, who puts it up to the RM.

No recommendations are made at this stage, but factual comparative analysis based on the dossiers is placed on record. It goes without saying that operational experience, appointment profile and qualities highlighted in the pen pictures are placed on record. An Intelligence Bureau check is carried out for adverse and reportable information with respect to character and reputation. The file is then move to various members of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet who place their views and recommendations on record.

The government as such has not laid down any appointment specific competency requirements and qualifications. Thus, subjectivity based on individual perceptions prevails. Finally, the file goes to the Prime

Minister who takes the final decision in consultation with the other members. The principle of 'merit cum seniority' is supposedly followed.

This system suffers from a number of infirmities

There is no clear-cut criteria or specific competency requirements and qualifications specified for the post of the COAS. Thus, the judgement becomes subjective. More so, when no detailed appraisal is done within the army for the Army Commanders.

The system of appraisal within the army is flawed, due to inflated reports because of lack of moral courage of the initiating officers, lack of objectivity, prevalence of regimental and arm parochialism, and weakness in the character of the assessing officers. A lot of this has to do with the leadership development and character of the officer corps as a whole, which is well below the ideal.

Over a period of time, some CsOAS and the Army Commanders have played a dubious role by promoting their prodigies, regimental and arm officers. They manipulate the postings, appointments and even promotions of the favoured ones, indirectly influencing the 'dossier merit' as future contenders. At times, even the selection to the rank of Lt Gen is manipulated, particularly when based on commissioning merit, date of birth and seniority, he could be a future contender for the coveted post of the COAS.

The posting or experience profile of an officer is vacancy-driven and decided by Army Headquarters. It is therefore not fair to decide merit based on specific experience. Higher command requires intellect, vision and will to execute. Experience only forms a backdrop.

The government has no inputs other than what is available in the dossier and the IB report. Thus, it entirely relies upon the inputs from the service headquarters in the absence of its own specific competency requirements and qualifications for the post of the COAS. What is given in the dossier is an appraisal of the officer up to the rank of Lt Gen and appointment of Corps Commander, which has little to do with the job of the COAS. No appraisal is carried out of the Army Commanders.

The RM has very little knowledge of the Army Commanders. There is no formal system of interviewing the prospective candidates. Visits by PM/RM are more 'meet and greet' affairs and less to assess the potential of prospective candidates.

Keeping the above in view, in absence of a clear-cut criteria or policy on merit and the backdrop of political interference leading to the debacle of 1962, most

governments stuck to the principle of seniority. Merit was left to the steep pyramidal selection within the Armed Forces. It is a safe and non-controversial system. Once it is known that a particular officer is in line as a Maj Gen/Lt Gen for the post of the COAS, he is groomed by the Army Headquarters/COAS by giving him varied command and staff experience.

This was done in respect of Gen Bakshi, wherein he was given the command of 9 Corps (though he himself had requested for an operational corps in the North East), which looks after the area from Chenab River to Pathankot, falling mostly in Jammu and Kashmir and involves both conventional defence and counter-terrorist operations. He was then posted as Chief of Staff of Northern Command to get top-end experience of the Fourth Generation War in Jammu and Kashmir and Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. He opted to command the Eastern Command instead of the Western Command for first-hand experience of the Line of Actual Control and counter-insurgency in the North East. His last logical posting should have been as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff to familiarise himself with policy matters and the functioning of the Army Headquarters/Ministry of Defence in September this year. Thus, there could not have been a better prepared person for the post of the COAS than him, based on the principle of seniority.

The Way Forward

Let us be clear, the government must have a Chief who is most meritorious and who will best execute its defence policy, National Security Strategy and Transformation Strategy. In order to select the best man on merit, the prerequisites for the appointment must be clear and unambiguous.

In my view, even among equals as selected within the service, there exists relative merit, keeping in view the competency requirements and qualification for the post of the COAS, which as per my perception are given below:

Capacity to provide best advice to the RM, PM and the Cabinet Committee for Security with candour and forthrightness and more importantly, the moral courage to disagree when required before a final decision is taken.

A wide-ranging intellect with broad knowledge of strategic and military affairs, understanding of the constitution and government functioning beyond military matters, and backed by a broad-based varied command, staff and operational experience as a higher formation commander (division and above).

Ability and will to execute the National Security strategy and Transformation Strategy; create and

sustain the deterrent decided by the government; and to lead intellectually and managerially his subordinate commanders for the same.

Tolerance for complexity and ambiguity

A man of character with impeccable integrity, moral courage, communication skills and bearing with a strong sense of ethics and trustworthiness - a role model for his service and the country.

At international fora and in military diplomacy, his personality must be worthy of admiration. The adversaries must hold him in awe.

Believe in civil government supremacy, have credibility with the public, media and parliament, and compatibility with the RM and the PM.

The specific competencies and qualifications must be formalised by the government, based on the recommendations of an appropriate committee.

In order to have a genuine merit and seniority-based selection system based on the above competencies and qualifications, a *de novo* look is required at the entire system.

The RM must be more actively involved in the selection process for senior commanders and the COAS. This is best done by a Senior Officers Management Committee, consisting of the RM, CDS (when appointed), COAS and the Defence Secretary assisted by the staff. The setting up of an independent permanent board headed by a retired COAS may also be considered. The final decision must rest with the RM.

The selection system must dig deep and identify capable officers at the level of Brigadiers or Major Generals who have the potential for higher command. These officers must be groomed by giving them varied command and staff experience by design and not by default. This must be overseen by the Senior Officers Management Committee/Board.

The Senior Officers Management Committee/Board must evolve a formal system of assessing the potential of prospective candidates for the appointment of Corps Commanders, principal staff officers and Army Commanders and the COAS, based on specific competencies and qualifications formulated for each appointment. Formal interactive interviews should be held.

The final recommendations after formal approval of the RM must then put up to the Cabinet Committee for Appointments and final selection made by the PM/

Needless to mention that for this process to function, radical reforms will be required to the existing appraisal and selection system within the Army. The RM must closely monitor this aspect

through the Senior Officers Management Committee/Board.

The government must shed ego, draw lessons from this controversy and initiate reforms to establish a genuine 'merit cum seniority' based system for selection of not only the COAS, but also other senior appointments which are approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. Any ambiguity in this regard will lead to the politicisation of the army hierarchy. In future, the accepted norm would be that all other things being equal, political patronage will ensure success. But before this, the government must carry out higher defence management reforms, formulate a National Security Strategy and lay down a time-bound Transformation Strategy.



Lt Gen Harcharanjit Singh Panag, PVSM, AVSM & VSM last served as GOC-in-C, Northern Command and GOC-in-C, Central Command. In December 2008, after his retirement from the military, he was appointed as an Administrative Member of the Armed Forces Tribunal. He is an alumnus of the prestigious National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Higher Command Course, Mhow and the National Defence College, New Delhi. This article first appeared at newslaundry.com, reproduced with permission of author and courtesy website. He has authored several publications concerning Indian defence forces and national security. He can be reached at Email: hspanag@gmail.com

No purpose will be served if we lay down elaborate specific competencies and qualifications for the Chiefs if all that they have to do is to sustain status quo.

Last but not least, to partially undo the damage done to the Indian Army, the government should make use of the two eminent, superseded generals either in the proposed higher defence management structure or at any other appropriate level. It would be unfair to make them serve under a junior.

Their loss of honour because of an ambiguous selection process, if not restored, will have an adverse effect on the morale of the Indian Army.

■

SMART BOMB TESTED

DRDO Successfully Tests Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon



Representation Pic.

The Defence and Research Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully tested an indigenous Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from an Indian Air Force aircraft, an official release said on September 24.

Designed and developed in-house within the country with indigenous processes and homegrown technologies, the 120-kg class smart weapon would be used to destroy runways, bunkers, aircraft hangers and other reinforced structures. Its long standoff range of 100 km will allow the IAF to hit adversary airfields with high precision from a safe distance. "The captive and release trials were tracked by radar and telemetry ground stations at the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha during the entire duration of the flight. The performance of all systems was satisfactory with all mission objectives achieved," said a press release.

The lightweight high-precision guided bomb is one of the world class weapons systems, the release said. The government sanctioned the ₹56.58 crore for the SAAW project in September 2013. DRDO Chairman Dr S. Christopher congratulated the DRDO and the IAF teams for

the successful mission.

In May, the DRDO conducted the first test on the weapon system from the IAF Jaguar DARIN-II aircraft in Bengaluru in Karnataka. "Two weapons were fired one after the other from the Jaguar and we also had chase aircraft recording the whole flight," said an official associated with the project. The test, that was carried out by IAF's Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE), assessed the 'shock' and 'release' characteristics of the weapon from the bomb mount on the Jaguar aircraft. The trial mode mounting of the SAAW on Jaguar DARIN-II aircraft is manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

In the latest test on December 24, scientists tested parameters like 'safe separation', the 'control guidance system' and the weapon's aerodynamics. The weapon has an Inertial Navigation System (INS) GPS-based guidance systems. IAF officials also said they would "exploring ways" to use from armed UAVs once the SAAW and other drone projects in the country see fruition.

Selection of Chief: Auto-Pilot Route to the Top?



The current system has another major drawback. It lends itself to manipulation by unscrupulous Chiefs and thus perpetuates a regime of patronage. Every Chief, on assumption of office obtains details of the dates of birth (and thus retirement dates) of senior officers and thereafter, identify prospective officers from his regiment or ilk. Before his tenure ends, he tweaks the system to ensure that the selected protégé is suitably placed and all likely challenges to his advancement are nipped in the bud. In other words, he firmly plants him in the 'line of succession'. The current system is most unacceptable. The concept of age-seniority based 'line of succession' ought to be discarded and replaced by merit based selection by impartial boards for higher ranks in the services. We have had enough of mediocre leadership.

by Maj Gen Mrinal Suman (Retd)



Recent appointment of the Chief of the Army Staff is being criticized by many. Most unfairly, they are terming it as a case of 'supersession' or 'out-of-turn promotion' or 'breaching the line of succession'. Their opposition is based on the following grounds:-

- All Army Commanders are equally capable of being the Chief.
- Seniority is sacrosanct and inviolable.
- The government has no right to meddle in the promotions of the army. It is for the army to throw up the senior-most as the prospective Chief.

The above logic is based more on insular sentiments than sound reasoning. Though equally applicable to all the three services, further discussion is being restricted to the army for the ease of analyzing the issue. To start with, it will be in order to recapitulate the existing system of selecting officers for the senior ranks.

Current Process is Highly Flawed

As per the present procedure, all general cadre officers of the rank of Major General are screened by a promotion board for approval for the rank of Lieutenant General (Lt Gen). Once empanelled, they stand in a queue as per their seniority; waiting for the vacancies of Corps Commander to come about. Those with more than three years' residual service become Corps Commanders. Others, even if more talented are wasted out on staff appointments. Hence, the Corps Commanders are not necessarily the most talented officers of their batch. They were simply lucky – their date of birth matched vacancies.

During 1998-1999, many brilliant Lt Gens failed to get command of Corps due to their unfavorable age-wise placement. Once the government extended retirement age of all service officers by two years, they had three years residual service and became eligible. They rightfully demanded and got appointed as Corps

Commanders. This case has been recalled here to demonstrate utter lack of merit in the whole process.

The same flawed process is followed for the appointment of Army Commanders. Once again, they form a queue, hoping and praying that a vacancy comes their way before their residual service falls below two years. No cognizance is taken of their performance as Corps Commanders. Following the same procedure, the senior-most serving Army Commander gets appointed as the Chief.

The above procedure can be equated with 'auto-pilot ride' – an army officer is required to prove his competence till he achieves the rank of Lt Gen. Thereafter, he rides auto-pilot and makes career advances purely on account of his seniority and date of birth. If well-placed in the age-seniority queue, any Lt Gen can be the Chief.

An interesting corollary of the above arrangement is that every general cadre officer approved to be Lt Gen is considered capable of being the Chief and, at any given time, there are over 60 such officers. It implies that either the Chief's job is so pedestrian that it can be performed by a multitude of officers, or, the army is flooded with abundance of talent. No rational organisation can boast of such a claim.

The wisdom of accepting the logic that every Corps Commander is fit to be the Chief is totally absurd. How can the criteria for a Corp Commander and the Chief be the same? A Corps Commander is a field commander of around 30,000 troops whereas a Chief wears multiple hats while heading 1.3 million-strong army. To equate the two appointments is highly untenable.

The current system has another major drawback. It lends itself to manipulation by unscrupulous Chiefs and thus perpetuates a regime of patronage. Every Chief, on assumption of office obtains details of the dates of birth (and thus retirement dates) of senior officers and thereafter, identify prospective officers from his regiment or ilk. Before his tenure ends, he tweaks the system to ensure that the selected protégé is suitably placed and all likely challenges to his advancement are nipped in the bud. In other words, he firmly plants him in the 'line of succession'.

Earlier such manipulation was done in a discreet manner. Over a period of time, the practice has

become so well entrenched that Chiefs have no qualms in openly flaunting their favoritism. In the recent past, one such parochial Chief resorted to unscrupulous means to clear way for his protégé to be the Chief. He found out that along with stalling promotion of other competent contenders to the rank of Lt Gen, he needed to curtail the tenure of a future Chief by a year to ensure top slot for his protégé. As a consequence, the army was saddled with a Chief who knew that he did not deserve to be there.

It is a well known fact that most Chiefs cannot shed their regimental bias. Instead of selecting best talent for higher appointments, their blinkered approach fails to see beyond infantry, armoured corps and artillery loyalties. Chiefs who have benefited from such preferred dispensation feel morally obliged to carry on in the same vein and extend similar benefaction to their regimental subordinates.

Another issue that is commonly overlooked relates

to the fixation of individual seniority. Within a batch, inter-se seniority is decided on the basis of the order of merit at the time of passing out from the Indian Military Academy (IMA) and does not change throughout the service career.

There have been numerous cases where highly competent officers failed to pick up appointments of Corps Commanders, Army Commanders and even Chief;

just because their course-mates were higher in the merit list prepared at IMA 35 years ago. Thus performance at IMA continues to be the decisive factor for promotion to the higher ranks. Operational service, war experience and demonstrated competence over decades of active career become inconsequential. Can there be a more irrational way of selecting top brass?

Finally

It should never be forgotten that it is the national government that is responsible for the defence of the country. National security is not an exclusive domain of the services. The armed forces do not exist and function in an insular environment. They are an instrument of the state.

It is for the government to decide how best to discharge its duties of ensuring national security. For that, it has an unalienable prerogative to choose the

The current system is most unacceptable. The concept of age-seniority based 'line of succession' ought to be discarded and replaced by merit based selection by impartial boards for higher ranks in the services. We have had enough of mediocre leadership. Even Army Commanders should be appointed through a diligent selection process.

best talent and it does not need to justify its choice. Fearing accusations of meddling in the internal functioning of the services, the government cannot abdicate its responsibility and allow the services to deprive the nation of the best talent available, that too under a highly specious plea of seniority.

Indian army is riven with regimental factionalism. Senior commanders advance in career but fail to grow up. They never shed their blinkered outlook. The mess created while granting additional vacancies to different arms and services is symptomatic of their narrow-mindedness. To favour their own arm/regiment, they have delivered a terrible blow to the army's cohesion.

Surprisingly, we appear comfortable with such internal parochialism and no voices are heard against such blatant partisanship. But, when the government exercises its prerogative to select Chief, our hackles go up and we start accusing it of politicization of the army. We call it interference in the internal affairs of the army; as if the army is an exclusive domain, independent of government oversight.

The current system is most unacceptable. The concept of age-seniority based 'line of succession' ought to be discarded and replaced by merit based selection by impartial boards for higher ranks in the services. We have had enough of mediocre leadership.

Even Army Commanders should be appointed through a diligent selection process.

Two posers:

- If the system of seniority based promotions is the best, why start so late at the level of Corps Commanders? Why not select/promote Brigade Commanders and Divisional Commanders on the basis of their inter-se seniority? What is good for senior appointments ought to be good for junior appointments as well!
- Agreed that all Corps Commanders are competent but some are brighter than the others. Should the army not get the best leadership? Similarly, all Army Commanders are capable officers and can assume the mantle of heading the army commendably. However, their suitability for the top job will not be identical. Why should the most suitable man not get selected? Why should the second-best leadership be given preference under the illogical plea of seniority?
- The current controversy is most unwarranted. Quality of top military brass is too serious a matter to be left to the quirks of seniority. Merit, talent and professionalism should be the sole criteria. The Indian armed forces must throw up the best leadership. We owe it to the nation. ■



Maj Gen Mrinal Suman (Retd) is India's foremost expert in defence procurement procedure and offsets. He heads Defence Technical Assessment and Advisory Services Group of CII. A prolific writer, he has over 300 published articles to his credit. He was the Task Force Commander for sinking shafts for the nuclear tests at Pokhran. He commanded his Engineer Regiment at Kargil-Siachen. He can be reached at Email: mrinalsuman@gmail.com

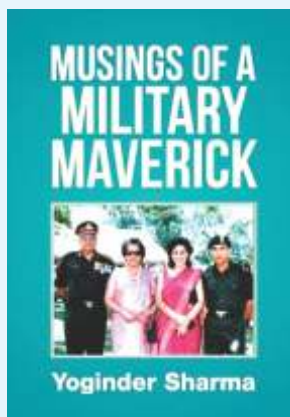
BOOK

'Musings of a Military Maverick'

Author: Lt Gen YN Sharma (Retd), Former Army Commander

The book 'Musings of a Military Maverick' is a marvel. Tightly written (121 pages), the author packs so much that is both interesting and educative. The General, having lost a leg in a mine explosion during the 1971 War, faced immense hurdles to rise in a highly competitive hierarchy. His successfully overcoming each obstacle through dignified stoicism and a steely resolve, comes out vividly as one wades through the narrative. The language is superb and the style is racy and readable.

The book is gripping, having enough narration of Army family life. Mrs Despina Sharma, comes out as a pillar of strength for the General through many dark patches in



his career. Their love for each other as they shunt from one military station to another was the main glue. Nothing is greater proof of her dedication than the fact that she left a UN job, her family and home to marry an Army captain in an unknown land. Her commitment and contribution to the military welfare activities is exemplary.

The book is recommended to military and civilian colleagues. It is available online at Amazon.in for 160/- for e-book or soft cover copy @ ₹350/- plus 50/- for postage. Alternatively, you can get an autographed copy from the Author - Plot No 2, Bhanu Enclave, Yaprul Road, Secunderabad (TS)-500087 (Email: yogi2g@gmail.com)

Appointment of COAS Triggers Serious Military Debate



Compiled by Col Vinay B Dalvi (Retd)



Consequent to the announcement of the name of Lt Gen Bipin Rawat, as the COAS designate to take charge from 01 Jan 2017 views have been projected on this development and its ramifications through both print and electronic media. Articles by two eminent Army generals, Lt Gen Vijay Oberoi and Lt Gen Ata Hasnain have projected two contrasting view points and triggered a serious professional military debate amongst several concerned veterans who themselves have held responsible high ranking military appointments in the past. They have responded to this development and put forth their forthright views based on their rich military background, expertise and experience. Apparently, the debate is basically between the Infantry and other Arms, especially Mechanized Forces (Armed Corps & Mechanised Infantry) to which the two superseded Army Commanders - Lt Gen Praveen Bakhshi and Lt Gen PM Hariz belong.

While many more articles will be penned down not only on the appointment of COAS and likelihood of CDS / Permanent Chairman COSC, the views given in the two lead articles have resulted in the surfacing of varied views from veterans of different Arms & Services. These views have been compiled to project varied views and perceptions in the form of an enriching professional military debate. The aim is basically to increase reader awareness on matters military, especially on this subject of appointing Service Chiefs and also long pending CDS which for many years (read decades), has created needless controversy, unwanted heart burning and consequent media attention.

Given below is a cross section of views of learned and experienced veterans across senior ranks of different Arms & Services, especially from concerned Infantry, Artillery & Mechanised Forces and Indian Air Force who too will have a new Chief of Air Staff (CAS) from 01 Jan 2017 and for which there is

apparently no controversy!

WHAT VETERANS SAY

Air Marshal Narayan Menon (Retd), ex-AOP, Air HQ

Having been an Air Officer-in-charge Personnel at Air HQ, I am aware of the procedure adopted while sending the list of contenders for the post of the Chief, to the MOD. In the case of the IAF, certain criteria have been laid down, as would be with the Army and the Navy. In the IAF, names of only flying branch officers are sent though there are Air Mshls in the Maintenance branch who has been AOC-in-Cs of commands. The criteria laid down states that the contender should have commanded an operational command. The IAF has five operational commands, WAC, SWAC, EAC, CAC and SAC. Training command is not included in this category nor is Maintenance Command. By tradition it has been the 'fighter pilots' who have been Chiefs with a couple of honourable exceptions like ACM PC Lal who began as a Navigator and later went on to fly fighters and ACM Fali Major who was a helicopter pilot.

In other countries, criteria are different. At Air HQ we hosted the head of the Japanese Air Defence Force who was an Air Traffic Controller.

It is my opinion that a 'flying branch' officer who has been scrutinised by Promotion Boards at the ranks of Wg Cdr, Gp Capt, Air Cmde, AVM and Air Mshl would have the necessary qualities to become the Chief, irrespective of the stream he has been in. The three streams being fighter, transport, and helicopter. With the advent of the UAV, those who are flying these 'drones' should also be considered an operational stream. In the changing technological environment, the day is not far off when an officer from the maintenance branch will have the necessary qualifications to lead the IAF.

The only negative in the promotion process is that after the final merit list is made, promotions are in the order of their commissioning date. If a comparatively junior officer has a brilliant record and comes out on top of the merit, he will be promoted only after his seniors in the list are promoted. This probably will have to be reviewed to ensure that pure merit trumps over a seniority decided at the time of commissioning.

In my opinion all officers who have made the grade to command various commands are equally capable to be the Chief. Being the Chief means one has to have a strategic view of the environment that prevails, it does not mean that you must have full knowledge of how to load a gun or man the LOC. The military has sufficient other competent officers to do such jobs.

Lt Gen Vishnu Chaturvedi, ex -Arty (DG MP & P Army HQ)

I never expected Gen Ata Hasnain to write such an article. He should know it's the Army Cdrs who are theatre Cdrs and they need to have such experience. Army's primary role is to fight external threats. Can anyone guarantee that there will be no war? If we need to fight in Western or Southern theatre, then would they change the Chief and look for a Mechanised Officer? Chiefs need to be strategist and display generalship. We had Gen Bipin Joshi who handled the worst phase of insurgency. It was he who raised the RR in record time to fight insurgency. Today we thank him for that. The criteria given by Ata could at best be for placing the Army Cdr in right place and not the Chief.

Air Cmde SN Bal (Retd)

Having signed off several rungs of the pyramid below the top, my comments can but be general in nature. In the ultimate analysis, merit must override other considerations. If the GOI has decided not to adhere to the seniority principle in the case of the next COAS and do a deep selection, then it is within the framework of the existing rules. It is finally up to the GOI to decide who is to be the next COAS and the next CAS. In the case of the CAS, the seniority principle has been adhered to. Of course, I must add that the CAS – designate was my pupil on gliders at the AFTT, NDA. To that extent it is indeed a pleasure to see my pupil going ahead of his instructor.

Col BN Bhatia (Retd) ex-Infantry, Artillery & Intelligence Corps

Agree entirely with Vishnu.

Let us not get trapped in the tunnel-view of "CI expertise", although it has now become a major

commitment of the Army.

Should an insurgency get full blown - and that is the Pak Army's aim - it has to be followed up by conventional intervention to sever the lines of comm to J&K. For us it would imply not only the prevention of this but also release the pressure in definite terms by the use or threat of use of requisite force.

A Service Chief thus ought to have a macro-view and is required to rally not only the full potential of his own service but also have the acumen of Jointmanship.

We are not yet talking of the national aim-plus which is not just to wage war if thrust on us but to be able to deter war.

We thus need strategists who display outstanding generalship, as Vishnu says.

To expect the bureau-political minds to think and act in these terms is rather far-fetched.

Col Pradeep Dalvi (Retd), ex-Mechanised Infantry

Looking at CI grid experience alone Gen Rawat certainly has better profile than Gen Bakshi and Gen Hariz. Like the corporate world have we laid down the role and job description of COAS? The primary role of Armed forces is against threat from external aggression. If that is so selecting chief only on secondary role credential of Counter Insurgency alone is laughable matter. Gen Joshi an AC officer as the chief had the vision to set up RR with virtually 'no resources' to deal with insurgency in J&K in the nineties. Do we really need chief who is expert in handling only small scale operations in protracted struggle against insurgency? In real war with our adversaries conventional WF and other non-state actors will play great role. Strategic deployment of strike corps and strategic weapons system including that of AF and Navy will be the battle winning factor. In today's conflict scenario, be it Syria, ISIS or else were is combination of strategic, conventional and non-conventional and non-state actors including cyber WF. The Chief has to be adapting in this kind of warfare. Some call it as 'Hybrid Warfare' which we are likely to face in next war with our adversaries.

Why AC and Mech offrs are not given adequate opportunity to command in CI grid? Has the MS branch laid down some policy on this issue? Coy Cdrs of RR and AR are provided by Mech forces but they are not given command of RR Bn! It is deliberate attempt to keep Mech Offrs away from the experience of CI grid resulting in situation of better CI grid experience to Inf Offrs. However I do not understand the logic of Inf offrs commanding 'Strike Corps' even without suitable

operational experience of Mech forces and its deployment. Case in point is 1 Corps. We need to lay down transparent policy right from junior level so that no particular Arm is favoured.

Col Parmesh K 'Royal' Mehrishi (Retd), ex-Infantry

- By allowing Politicians & Babus to tinker with the selection (election ?) of the COAS we are playing with fire (which has the potential to engulf our own existence)
- If super-session becomes a trend then lobbying & "sucking up" the Politician will begin.
- There is an unwritten code among professional soldiers (especially officers) that the integrity & competence of a fellow colleague/senior is never discussed with persons outside the profession, outsider meddling is akin to an assault on military brotherhood.
- Some may ask "where is the brotherhood"? In today's scheme of things. Well with so many stressors in every day professional life it is all the more required as a safety net.
- In the race to become some are losing the race to being.
- At the level of Army Commander all are more or less equally competent & if competence be the criteria why not cast a wider net by considering even Corps Commanders in the head hunt for the top job.
- Let us accept, we have messed up. A person selected over his seniors for the top job will be grateful to the person who anoints him for the post.
- At that level favors rendered have to be returned by clamming up on issues which require the show of a minuscule of back bone

Gp Capt TP Srivastava (Retd)

Let us welcome the new COAS and CAS. No deliberations are required as to why they were picked to head respective services. We are a little immature in military and view supersession as a 'measure of incompetence'. I am a firm believer that we promote 'most competent' from a group of 'competent officers'.

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, any discussion, irrespective of persons involved, is irrelevant and would lead to lowering of the status of COAS. Perhaps, we learn on this aspect from our bureaucrats .When Menon was appointed as Foreign Secretary by the previous government superseding 12 colleagues there was no noises except for Sikri couple?

Contrarian views, irrespective of supposed logic will not alter outcome. Even if we even manage to prove that superseded officers are better than the

selected COAS, we are in effect directly asserting that 'A' not so competent person heads the valiant Indian Army.'

It must be borne in mind that all views/counterviews posted on social media / net is also being read and discussed by junior officers as well as men.

I, therefore, leave it to the wisdom of Generals, who must place their views in public domain.

I am of the view that Bipin Rawat and Dhanoa remain the best candidates to lead respective service.

Rear Admiral Vineet Bakshi (Retd), Ex-CMD, Goa Shipyard

The Republic and the Soldier: The article by Lt Gen Ata Hasnain made interesting reading in that it unequivocally underlined and supported the departure from the convention and tradition of the senior most qualified officer becoming the Service Chief. Sure there have been precedents in the not too distant past of Lt Gen SK Sinha and VAdm Shekar Sinha being superseded, and the Services had got on with their tasks, albeit with much heart burn, caused by the perception that it is purely a political decision. This begins to appear to be the continued demolition of the institutions of bypassing well established norms and suggests the start of the demise of the Republic. It is easy to destroy the essence and yet retain the ritual. History has parallels of the Roman Empire and European history in the 1930s. Historical parallels are at best indicative, nonetheless, they do give an idea of the possible course of events. Surely two fine Army Commanders, both handling CI Ops would have had adequate experience on their Staff to fill in the blanks. That's just what General Staff does.

By virtue of its symbolic meaning, tradition enjoys a special status and has significance of the solidity of our selection system. Though convention, as in this case, is particularly important, having being derived from our Westminster style of working, this relies quite strongly on precedence in the absence of explicit rules. Such conventions are drawn up to enhance the standing of the institution and insulate them from undue interference. The Government has taken a decision and that is over. Our faith in the Republic is that in the case of the soldier, this will remain an exception.

**Concluding Remarks - Shashwat Gupta Ray
Editor Gomantak Times Goa**

I have been perusing the responses by veterans on COAS appointment and the media coverage as well. At the outset, I find it amusing that there is a "contro-

versy". It is a pure administrative decision taken by the Union government to select an incumbent whom it deems fit for the top job.

The debate is turning into an Infantry versus Armoured Corps versus Mechanised Infantry debate, which is unwarranted.

Supersession in the armed forces is routine. Also, everywhere - sports and professional world, there is always one common dictum followed - "Horses for courses". If the entire professional world can follow this mantra for selecting a team and team leader, why not the Armed Forces?

There is no rule anywhere stating that the senior most general cadre officer has to be the next chief. If the establishment thinks that a particular officer is more suited for that job then be it. What is the problem in such a decision?

There is no question about Lt Gen Rawat's abilities. He is an expert in CI-ops. Today one likes it or not, the rule of the combat game has changed. It is clearly identified now that there would be lesser of military-to-military engagement on an open battlefield and there would be more urban centric low intensity battle with non-state actors taking centre stage.

In this scenario, at least in the coming three years that Gen Rawat is going to serve, I certainly do not foresee a major Tank battle with Pakistan or China. Neither do I envisage any direct involvement of Mechanised Infantry in counter insurgency ops apart from just providing fire cover while transporting the troops. So where is the combat experience for a Service chief to show his expertise?

After 1971 and Sri Lanka Op Pawan, the only major conflict the Indian Army was engaged in was the 1999

Kargil war. But even in that operation, none of India's MBTs or the BMPs was involved in any direct action.

Those who actually fought were infantry men, with active Artillery support. This situation is going to become even more common as our enemies are looking towards avoiding a direct combat engagement and the principle of "no collateral damage" followed by Indian Govt under the pressure of human rights organisations. This means that there will not be any use of tanks or even artillery guns within a human settlement where the insurgents are engaging the Indian Army.

Keeping this situation in mind, the government has done the right thing by choosing an experienced hand in low intensity conflict who would work towards not only giving a befitting reply to the adversary but also towards reducing Army casualties, which has been the highest this year and it is not over yet.

If the situation changes tomorrow and the need arises, the incumbent Government will surely select a Mechanised Forces officer as Chief. Nothing is sacrosanct.

Last Word!

As the grapevine reveals, the issue of CDS / Chairman COSC remains pending till date with the Govt / MoD. Both Lt Gen Praveen Bakshi and Lt Gen PM Hariz still have another 7 and 11 months of service left till their superannuation at the age of 60 years in July & Nov 2017 respectively. It remains to be seen if the Govt decides to approve CDS / Chairman COSC before that or even before 31 Dec 2016? ■

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1971 War Pillar Memorial in Chennai

Will the Govt Bite the Bullet on appointing Chief of Defence Staff?



In effect the CDS, in my opinion, besides being the head of the HQ IDS must be responsible for all aspects except single service operations. However, in the interim stage, training and logistics will remain service specific. Eventually, common policies on personnel management must emerge. We cannot have such management differences as residual ages for Commanders in Chief being different for army, navy and the air force and that is just the tip of the iceberg.

by Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd)



I hate to believe rumours, but when they are discussed quite openly and by very knowledgeable people, I don't mind joining in with informed guess work and some analysis. Currently, the hottest potato is the information that the government is going to make the long awaited announcement on the appointment of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS). This should excite a lot of people. If it happens, the NDA government would have delivered on its manifesto and created quite a ripple before the upcoming assembly elections. The issues, which the public must get to know about the decision, if finally taken, are quite a few. Just like people, who still approach me to explain what one rank one pension (OROP) is all about, there are many who will want to know the 'ifs' and 'buts' of CDS.

Firstly, it is a good 17 years after the Kargil Review Committee headed by K Subramaniam made the recommendation that India would finally have a CDS – something most modern armed forces adopted many years ago. However, is it really necessary to have one? Absolutely yes, in the opinion of almost every military professional.

The military subset of national security, as one of

its main components, has become so complex today that no single service can claim primacy. The ground or continental, maritime and air/space dimensions now also have the cyber domain thrown in. With transformation and the revolution in military affairs ongoing for many years, the necessity to convert all military operations to the 'joint' format is a compulsion. 'Joint' here essentially means that single service can no longer fight their individual wars and only assist other services as a secondary effort. All planning must take place jointly, placing all resources in the basket and exploiting them optimally for the common national goal. Doctrinal guidance for this must be joint too, as much as the training needed to back it. Single service glory hunting will then not be possible. It may sound mundane to our civilian brethren, but it is a truism that in spite of being aware of the necessity to optimally plan and deploy all resources, each service first looks at its own domain.

This is not peculiar to India, it happens everywhere in the world. The US military, the world's most advanced, had major problems in this regard. Narrow service loyalties kept coming in the way of joint operations. Fed up of the inability of the men in

uniform resolving this issue, the US legislature in 1987 passed the famous Goldwater-Nichols Act, which was initiated under former president Ronald Reagan. This Act legislated the creation of joint structures and organisations – the classic 'theatre command' system. The position of the then already strengthened Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff received a further impetus. The US system is an extremely advanced one, where the service chiefs are responsible only for training, procurement and partially non-operational logistics, besides being in touch with the government. The theatres comprise a mix of all components of the four services (the US has the Marine Corps as the fourth arm) with the necessary resources, under the command of the theatre commander also known as the combatant commander, who reports directly to the Secretary Defence – not to be confused with the Defence Secretary as in India who is a bureaucrat. The Secretary Defence is the Defence Minister of the US. The theatre commanders through him report to the US President, who is the working Supreme Commander.

The CDS system, known under different avatars around the world, also has a national stamp based upon each country's own military experience. It is interesting to see the Pakistan model, which I learn came into being in General Zia ul Haq's time. Pakistan's armed forces have been comfortable with the creation of the post of 'General Number One', primarily because it is a toothless appointment – the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS).

Jointness between the three services may exist notionally or even marginally, but Pakistan has placed its nuclear weaponry and its safety under his control and he reports directly to the prime minister. His powers otherwise are restricted. This appointment does not become a single window for reference with the government on matters military. Anyway Pakistan's model is just too unique because its army and its chief, who is officially virtually General Number Two, has an out of proportion power in guiding and deciding security policies for Pakistan. It is just worth keeping in mind as one end of the spectrum of models, which we in India could refer to.

In 2001, as an interim acceptance of the Kargil Review Committee recommendations, the Government of India created the HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS). Planning, procurement, doctrine, intelligence, training and even joint operations came under its purview but service specific issues in the same realms continued to dominate the organisational narrative. The Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) raised in 2001 virtually functions under the NSA. The Strategic Forces Command (SFC), also established in 2001, which is the controlling establishment for nuclear weapon assets of India, remains virtually outside the ambit of the joint staff and has also passed into the hands of the NSA. An experiment with theatrisation was commenced with the raising of the Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC).

Recently, at the behest of the former naval chief, the command of ANC, which was always rotational between the three services, has now been given permanently to the Indian Navy. The nature of threats to the ANC area of responsibility probably dictated the decision. Many appear to disagree with the command of a theatre being exercised by a single service. However, there is precedent in the form of the Pacific Command of the US which is commanded by a four-star naval officer. Personally, I do believe the navy has the better expertise to exercise command control under

perhaps a later time when the joint intellect is a certainty.

The problem is that from 2001 to 2016 is a long period to experiment and not act in the true and honest interest of jointness. There is much speculation that the inordinately long time may have allowed bureaucratic control over the resources, which must actually come legitimately under the new CDS, when appointed. The Indian jointness model will also be unique. Unlike the individual service chiefs having little or no operational responsibility in the US, the Indian service chiefs will continue to exercise operational control right into the foreseeable future. I do not also foresee any further regional theatrisation taking place in the Indian context for quite some time. Not for any other reason, but simply

In effect, the CDS in my opinion, besides being the head of the HQ IDS must be responsible for all aspects except single service operations. However, in the interim stage training and logistics will remain service specific. Eventually, common policies on personnel management must emerge. We cannot have such management differences as residual ages for Commanders in Chief being different for army, navy and the air force - and that is just the tip of the iceberg.

because it needs a degree of intellectual engagement preceding any executive directions. There has to be conceptual clarity before the introduction of a holistically new application or a concept.

In effect, the CDS in my opinion, besides being the head of the HQ IDS must be responsible for all aspects except single service operations. However, in the interim stage training and logistics will remain service specific. Eventually, common policies on personnel management must emerge. We cannot have such management differences as residual ages for Commanders in Chief being different for army, navy and the air force – and that is just the tip of the iceberg.

There is much speculation about the personalities who are likely to don the mantle of the first appointment of CDS. In 2001, the then army chief magnanimously offered it to the IAF as a goodwill gesture.

However, as the largest service with the most complex responsibility, the army appears to be the right place to start with, not necessarily because it is my service. The name being spoken of is that of Lt Gen Praveen Bakshi, currently GOC-in-C Eastern Command. Purely my personal opinion, the officer has the right gravitas to carry off the appointment as the first CDS near perfectly. He has the intellectual bent and the necessary experience to wear this cap and take responsibility which will need deft handling.

All that is left to do now is the shouting and the celebration for the final decision on the creation of the CDS. Much, however, will depend on the political-military-bureaucratic triangular control to establish the right balance for the functioning of this appointment. On that an essay at a later date. ■



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OTA cadets honour Martyrs before POP



Wreath laying ceremony in remembrance of Martyrs prior to the Passing Out Parade conducted at OTA War Memorial, Gaya (Bihar)

Is the Institution of Service Chiefs Degenerating?



With a former air chief having been arrested by CBI in AgustaWestland bribery charges and recent politicizing of the appointment of new army chief, superseding another senior incumbent is the lowest ebb of the institution of service chiefs under degeneration by the ruling class purportedly. Armed forces of India have brought victory to the nation and is the last resort in keeping the Sovereign intact. Such acts by governments tamper with the ethos of the institution and demoralizes the fighting men. It also reflects poorly in an ever polarizing civil-military relationship. The powers-that-be need to curb such impropriety in the interest of the country and manage this institution above any other office.

Team Fauji India



There have been no darker times for the armed forces like these, beginning the OROP agitation where our servicemen were, literally, driven to beggary for their legitimate worth for something that was anything but complicated. And it (OROP) was given, the form and its definition was a perversion of the concept's spirit, notwithstanding having made it happen in some form. Even NFU had to be fought in the Court by some daunting Faujis and the AFT giving a favourable verdict. Though one will have to wait for it be realized.

A truncated OROP was followed by the downgrading of serving military ranks in parity before their civilian offices – 7CPC Recommendations – which gave the impression that the government considered a clearly physically hazardous and career stunting profession like the Fauj as easier and inferior to moving files and make 'notings' from the comfort of air conditioned offices.

The ruling class may have lost favour with the military fraternity – a major chunk of whom gave the ruling party their votes in the hope of gaining the

above prospects. A substantial number still owe their allegiance to the party and form a part of their robust news manufacturing unit but that's a different story. But nothing will disenchant our armed forces than former air chief SP Tyagi's arrest in the AgustaWestland deal investigations, that exposes several facets of the government's insensitivity, the media's ignorance and the country's illiteracy with military matters and service issues.

Shriller voices of their Izzat's loss and vociferous drumbeating of their glorious roles followed the humiliating downscaling in the 7CPC, temporarily securing the everyday Indian's sympathy and attention towards this abysmally ignored grievance. Our issues had just begun to find space in the general public discourse when the horrors of the Agusta Westland case came back to haunt the government and defence administration after ACM SP Tyagi's arrest. All the ground gained to re-orient the general narrative in favour of the armed forces' woes was lost and we just watched all the empathy just go away.

The unanimous opinion among the serving,

retired fraternity and the strategic 'think-tank' community is flatly in support of Tyagi – that he has been scapegoated to shield those really instrumental in this intricately complex mother-of-all scams. The most oft-quoted argument being that a service chief has virtually no power in deciding procurements, besides an advisory role in merely recommending the most appropriate ware, is readily forwarded, in varying degrees of detail and knee-jerk rhetoric. That even if he was involved, the lowering of the 'service ceiling' requirement (from 6,000 meters to 4,572 meters) could not have been engineered by him alone for two reasons. One, procurements are a multiple departmental concern of branches ranging from the MoD, the PMO, the Ministry of Finance and other bodies like the CCS and the DAC, that are comprised largely by the political executive.

Tweaking the SQRs to swing the deal in Agusta Westland's favour, by no stretch of imagination, especially in the prevailing procurement set up, could not have been the sole handiwork of ACM Tyagi himself. It has to have had connivance from officials from the PMO, the Special Protection Group (SPG) – which itself was a participant in framing the SQRs and the evaluation trials – and the MoD. In other words, empowering the service chief with such a crucial discretion is not consistent with the present system where the services are deprived of every rightful monetary and material due, with rules of the game obscenely skewed to the advantage of the bureaucracy and complete exclusion from policy making, in spite of a remarkable political neutrality and consistent victories in every war.

So, even if ACM Tyagi did have hands greased by Agusta Westland and wanted see through their selection, he simply wasn't administratively empowered to change those specifications all on his own! Moreover, consider the CAG observations tabled before the Parliament on August 13, 2013, where it observes several infirmities and alarming procedural deviations on the part of the other departments like the SPG and the MoD. For instance the SPG is discovered to have insisted for the requirement to 8 from 12.

The MoD meanwhile sought eight deviations from

the then defence minister that included reducing the validity of the 'option' clause from 5 years to 3 years and the deletion of a Missile Approach Warning System (MAWS). The MoD also diluted the warranty of 3 years or 900 hours from 'whichever is later' to 'whichever is earlier' in the RFP. Now these changes obviously could not have been engineered by ACM Tyagi alone, even if he wanted to.

Thus, all we are saying is this: If such facts show that it was a purchase where several entities were involved, non-participation of anyone of which could have stalled the entire procurement, and thereby any fraud, why arrest only the former air chief? And of course, the argument of arresting him a full three years after the FIR against is the single biggest question.

The office of a service chief will now be mentioned in the same breath as your friendly neighborhood *sarkaari daftar*, a dangerous cliché that should not be

Not toeing the line and taking a stand over an issue has cost two service Chiefs their offices – Admirals Vishnu Bhagwat and DK Joshi. While Bhagwat was given the boot for opposing the Cabinet's Appointment Committee selecting Vice-Admiral Harinder Singh to the post of the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral DK Joshi's was a casualty of the government's poorly educated approach to military matters.

applied to our armed forces at least. Yes, we have had our transgressions, but they have been mere infractions compared to what our *netas* and *babus* have on their rap sheets. ACM Tyagi's arrest and other recent instances in the national limelight have demonstrated a steady undermining of the highest office of a service. Because this is not the first time that the office of the service chief has been denigrated due to a dysfunctional approach to national security and military matters by the political

bureaucratic combine. Not toeing the line and taking a stand over an issue has cost two service chiefs their offices – Admirals Vishnu Bhagwat and DK Joshi. While Bhagwat was given the boot for opposing the Cabinet's Appointment Committee selecting Vice-Admiral Harinder Singh to the post of the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral DK Joshi's was a casualty of the government's poorly educated approach to military matters. He had to put in his papers when the government, consumed with fixing accountability for exploding submarines, had to find someone to lay it all on. The *netas* didn't even flinch and accepted his resignation.

Diminishing the status of the office of the service chief is one thing but using the armed forces as a tool to forward a political agenda and securing mileage is another revolting perversion of this institution of

discipline and probity. Our defence minister demonstrated his appalling insensitivity towards our military's competence – more than praised by international armies – when he said it was him who made the army realize its capability: “Indian troops were like Hanuman who did not quite know their prowess before the surgical strikes.” Seriously? Is this some unconfident-socially-awkward-but-brilliant-boy-being-prep talked-by-a-counselor deal? And that means all the four wars we have won can be credited to a cheering up by a *neta*? He later made it worse by crediting the RSS for the successful surgical strikes, in a flabbergasting display of blind faith and brazen politicization by congratulating someone who hasn't even held a gun for having perfectly fired it.

The surgical strikes also showed how no political party cannot fight the primal urge to use a military victory to garner votes when Parrikar succumbed to its lure and said something amusingly self-contradictory: “While the army should be credited for the successful surgical strikes, the political party must also be cheered for taking the bold decision.” One brief ray of

hope of a mature handling of the strikes' announcement – when it was left to the DGMO and not a political leader to not project is as a political achievement – and then undoing it all by such statements.

What message would it send down the army rank and file when the defence minister compared Gen Suhag's men to the *Vaanar Sena*? Or how does it reflect on the army when MNS's Raj Thackeray orders hapless movie makers to deposit ₹5 crore in the Army Welfare Fund account to spare their movies from his party's ire? Our veterans thankfully timely blasted his statement and refused to accept such “extorted donations” but it still inserted a germ of doubt about the army's secular and progressive credentials.

Armed forces of India have brought victory to the nation and is the last resort in keeping the Sovereign intact. Such acts by governments tamper with the ethos of the institution and demoralizes the fighting men. It also reflects poorly in an ever polarizing civil-military relationship. The powers-that-be need to curb such impropriety in the interest of the country.■

Real Heroes of Kashmir



Real Heroes of Kashmir by Maj Gaurav Arya

Babu Hatao, Fauji Bachao

Trifling with the Fauj and national security

by Maj Gen SG Vombatkere (Retd)



Civil-military relations are today at an all-time low and although the decades-long continuity of the bureaucratic hand is obvious in the current NDA-2 dispensation, there is also evidence of the political leadership humiliating the military. Let us begin with CBI's arrest of Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi, India's former air chief, in connection with the AgustaWestland helicopter purchase deal. It raises some questions not only about the functioning of the political leadership and the bureaucrat-police network, but also about hidden motivations and unintended compromise of national security due to its effect on the morale of India's military.

Questions arise as to why ACM Tyagi was arrested when others involved were not. Was it done deliberately to humiliate him and thereby India's military? Was this the handiwork of bureaucrats and/or the police? Who among the political hierarchy authorised his arrest?

These questions are not about whether or not ACM Tyagi is guilty of receiving bribes or any other offence. That matter will be settled by the courts after examining all evidence. But when evidence is still being collected, when ACM Tyagi is cooperating with CBI in collection of evidence, and there is no prima facie case against him, his arrest raises the question: Why was ACM Tyagi singled out for humiliation?

Humiliating the military

Let us recall that during the NDA-1 rule under PM Vajpayee, defence minister George Fernandes summarily dismissed navy chief Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat from service. It is clear that government wanted to show its power over the military by summarily dismissing a defence service chief, because the proper and sensible thing to do was to summon

Admiral Bhagwat and ask him to resign. Dismissing him in peremptory manner was an act of cowardice. The most generous view one can take is that government (politician-bureaucrat) had no clue as to the repercussions that public humiliation of a serving defence chief would have on the morale of the Indian Navy and the sister services. Or was the summary dismissal by design? What purpose was served by humiliating Admiral Bhagwat and the military as a whole?

Now that ACM Tyagi and the military have been humiliated by the NDA-2 government, in retrospect Admiral Bhagwat's dismissal appears to fall in place, especially because in between the Bhagwat and Tyagi incidents, there have been incidents in the NDA-2 tenure which appear to have been directed at humiliating the military and adversely affecting soldiers' morale, and thereby compromising national security. To name a few in random sequence:

- Sending police to manhandle peacefully agitating Veterans at Jantar Mantar.
- Stating that OROP would be given to military Veterans by taking it from dues to poor farmers.
- Notwithstanding reservations of the defence services chiefs, peremptorily directing the three Service Chiefs to implement the 7CPC award without delay.
- Keeping the military without access to the 7CPC Anomalies Committee which was secretly arranged for civilians.
- Raising the salaries of CRPF above that of soldiers.
- Downgradation of military ranks vis a vis civilian officials.
- Granting NFU to IPS but not to the military.
- The issue of pay parity with IAS/IPS.
- Lower hazard allowance than IAS/IPS.

- Stating that the army did not know its own capability to carry out the post-Uri surgical strike until it was told so.
- Reducing disability pension immediately following the post-Uri surgical strike.
- The military commander being pushed aside by a bureaucrat at the 2016 Red Fort Independence Day function.
- Insulting military war memorials and guard of honour by a functionary deliberately dressing inappropriately or casually.

These and more, are apart from the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare appealing as a matter of policy against every judicial decision given in favour of individual Veterans.

Meddling with military leadership

The recent unprecedented step of “deep selection” of Lt Gen Bipin Rawat as army chief designate by superseding two senior officers, even though this is within the discretionary powers of the cabinet, has caused disquiet among soldiers and veterans. The reason for disquiet is that government appears not to understand that Lt Gen Rawat is not superior in merit to his two seniors whom he has superseded, and if his experience in counter-insurgency is the criterion for his selection, it glosses over the fact that the army is deployed in counter-insurgency only because of the decades-long failure of the bureaucracy-police in its primary role of internal security. If however deep selection was a political decision, this could seriously

compromise the army (the military, in general) remaining as India's last bastion of secular practice, and encourage sycophancy among officers to the permanent detriment of military professionalism.

It is necessary to note that previous governments including NDA-1 and the Congress regimes preceding and including UPA-1 and UPA-2, had undoubtedly given the military a raw deal, particularly with regard to successive central pay commissions and the OROP demand. Gen Vaidya was appointed army chief by superseding Lt Gen Sinha, and army chief Gen Rodrigues was publicly castigated for his “bandicoots” remark. Even though the political leadership was primarily responsible, the hand of the bureaucracy was clear to every serving and retired soldier.

The precipitous dip in civil-military relations is because bureaucrat-police machinations are increasingly blatant, and rather than taking control of the military and releasing it from the Babu-stranglehold, some top political leaders are thoughtlessly causing humiliation. Questions are being asked as to who will bring this to the notice of the National Security Council. One veteran even suggested a slogan on the lines: “Babu Hatao, Fauji Bachao”, so that civilian control of the military is actually with the union cabinet.

Considering that the NSA is a police officer with enormous clout at the top-most level, upgrading of the status of the police over the military while simultaneously humiliating the military is extremely dangerous for the security and safety of India. ■



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Armed Forces simmer with anger, Govt blind to their DOWN-GRADATION

by Col Manmohan Singh (Retd)

For people in the armed forces it is not about money. If it was, then many would have joined the corporate world where there were lucrative pay packages. Then what is it? It is about honour (Izzat). That is where it hurts most when you see a civilian officer much lower in service being upgraded just because they have an association and can push their way through the political bosses.



Disturbed over the continued down gradation of Defence Forces, the Question No 1477 was tabled in Rajya Sabha by Karnataka MP Shree Rajeev Chandrashekar during last month. However, MoS (MoD) Shree Subhash Bhamre in his response on behalf of the government on 29 Nov 2016, showed total disregard to the sentiments of the armed forces personnel in submitting a factually incorrect reply. He stated that the equivalence shown in CAO/MoD letter of 18 Oct 2016 does not amount to down gradation, wherein a Brig has been equated with civilian Director and Maj Gen with civilian Principal Director.

The armed forces personnel feel totally betrayed, cheated and stabbed in the back as the three-member committee detailed by the RM to resolve the 'equivalence' issue had not even commenced its proceedings when this reply was paced before the Parliament. This implies that the detailment of this Committee by the RM is a total farce and an eye wash to manage the outrage pouring in the social media against the government on this issue.

The Current Status Issue – Recently, while the nation was rejoicing on the success of the surgical strikes, a letter from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) from the Ministry of Defence

(MoD) on 18 Oct 16, gave a body blow to the morale of defence officers by issuing rank equations which drastically lowered the status of officers as compared to their civilian counter parts. When a lot of hue and cry was raised in the social media, RM accepted the inaccuracies in CAO/MoD letter of 18 Oct 2016 and therefore constituted a three member committee

headed by Ms Surina Rajan, Addl Secy (Def Production) to resolve the equivalence issue. However, the reply in Rajya Sabha on 29 Nov 2016 by RRM has again created a flutter amongst defence community. Has the Govt already buckled under the bureaucratic pressure against the armed forces!

Pay & Status Issue – In the army, discussing pay (money), women, religion and politics have always been forbidden. It has good reasons too. These are the four things that could easily create a divide within the forces. The armed forces personnel have to be apolitical and united so that nothing distracts them from the primary aim of fighting the enemy. Most of the defence personnel therefore grow up ignorant and isolated to the happenings in the corridors of power. They trust their seniors in the hierarchy and believe that the government of the day would look after their interests. After all, they are the only government arm that is directly placed under the command of the President of India. Have they been wrong in doing so?

In earlier days, having been brought up in an environment where there was paucity of equipment, vehicles, ammunition, and austerity measures etc., a life filled with shortages was taken as normal. Though the pay was meagre, still they were happy and contended with food in the stomach, kids in school and a roof over their heads. However, liberalisation, economic growth and revolutionary growth in communications gave the defence personnel the much-deprived access to information that awakened them to the fact that they had been short changed right from 1973.

...RAGING SENTIMENTS

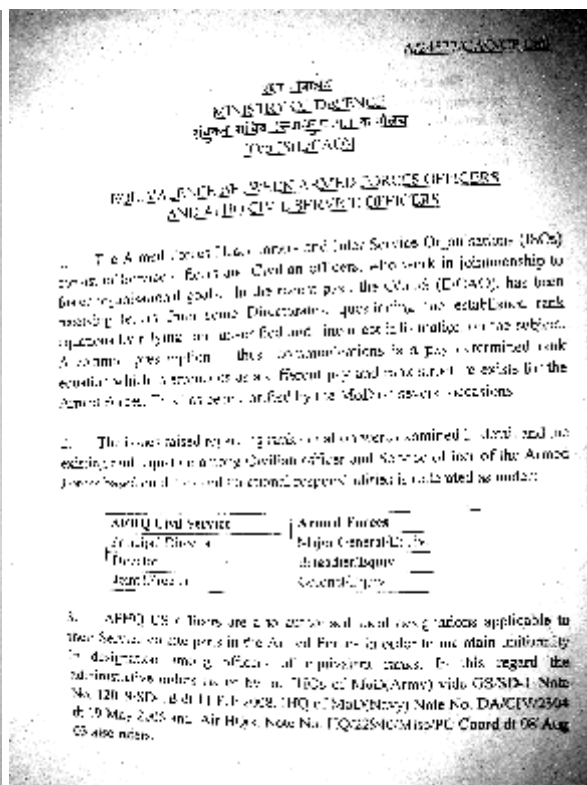
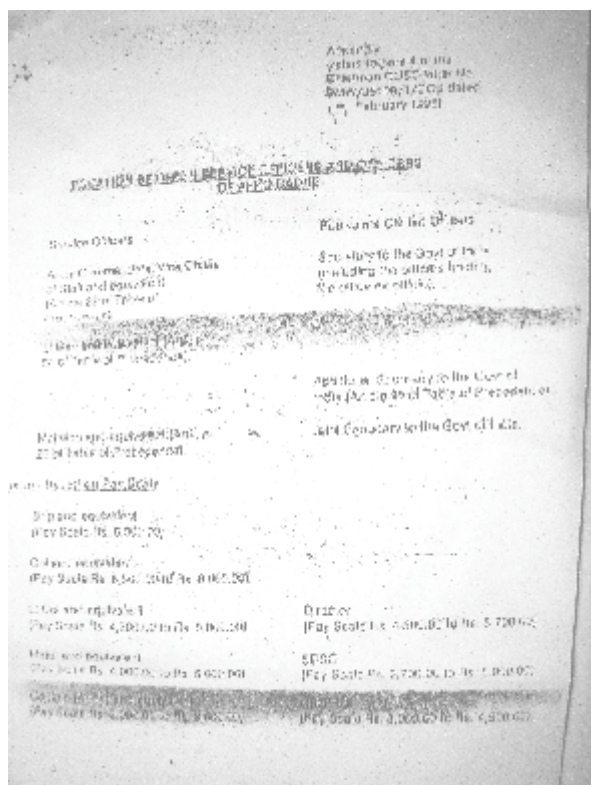
It is only when Maj Dhanapalan took the government to court over the 'Rank Pay' case that they realised that the bureaucrats had mischievously deducted 'Rank Pays' from the 'Basic Pay' while implementing IV CPC recommendations, which reduced their Basic Pays, and consequently the comparative status with respect to the police and other civilian officers of the same grade. Though the arrears in the 'Rank Pay' case have now been paid by the government from 1986 onwards because of the Kerala High Court and SC Judgement of 2012, the lower Grade Pays fixed by the VI CPC, by not including the Rank Pays as a part of Basic Pay, have not been corrected till date.

Consequently, a civilian Director, who was earlier in similar pay scales as a Lt Colonel, was given the higher Grade Pay equivalent to a Colonel. In fact, armed forces officers who worked alongside civilians in organisations like services HQs, MoD, DRDO, MES, DGQA etc., suddenly found themselves demoted. In addition, the complete bureaucracy, despite having much faster promotions, awarded themselves the benefit of still higher pay by means of Non-Functional Upgradation (NFU), yet kept the military out of it.

The VII CPC, instead of resolving the outstanding anomalies, has further compounded the deterioration

as the civilian bureaucrats have been allowed to transit to comparative higher Pay Levels by including NFU to their pay scales, besides downgrading the allowances of military personnel, especially with respect to Disability Pensions. The government has not only refused grant of NFU to armed forces personnel, despite one of the VII CPC members stating that if there is anyone who deserves the NFU most, it is the armed forces alone, it has fixed salaries of armed forces personnel in comparatively lower pay levels. Since the pay levels would now become status determinant amongst central government employees, the armed forces personnel down gradation stands complete unambiguously. *The nation often falls back on the armed forces in times of crisis, but whom should now the armed forces personnel trust when their own government betrays them?*

Warrant of Precedence – Historically, Warrant of Precedence (WoP), published by the President Secretariat has always been used for establishing status equivalence between armed forces officers and central civil services officers. The WoP of 1979 is used to determine this equivalence for Maj Generals and above, while the old WoP is used for Brigs and below. Use of old WoP for officers under Brigadier has been



The 1992 letter (LEFT), and the Oct. 2016 letter (RIGHT). Shows how precedence of armed forces is declining over the years by inflated-ego babudom.

clarified by the MHA by issuing a letter in 1966 and by reiterating the same in 2007. In accordance with WoP, Maj Gens have always been equated with Jt Secys while Lt Cols have been equated with Supdt Engineers and Directors. To change this equivalence, the bureaucracy off late has started propagating that WoP is meant only for protocol purposes. However, protocol and status are directly related as no junior official can be accorded higher protocol and vice-a-versa. The Cambridge dictionary defines the 'precedence' as the order of importance given to people in particular societies, groups, or organizations; the condition of being considered more important than someone or something else; priority in importance, order, or rank.

GoM Report and PMO Directive of 2008 – A Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Pranab Mukherjee with the RM as the member, had been detailed, vide PMO Note dated 27 Sep 2008 on a related issue. The GoM concluded that Lt Cols have always been placed higher than Dy Secys/Jt Dirs even after stripping them of their Rank Pay. The report has been accepted by PMO and Cabinet, as conveyed vide PMO Directive of 27 Dec 2008. The Supreme Court in its judgement on September 4 2012 in IA No. 9 of 2010 had subsequently upheld the Kerala High Court Order dated 05 Oct 1998 in OP No. 2448 of 1996 directing for inclusion of Rank Pay as part of Basic Pay for all purposes. Once the implications of ibid Court Judgement are fully implemented by the Govt, then the Lt Cols would be placed again at par with the Directors to Govt of India.

Court/CAT Judgements – Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) Chennai Bench in OA No 298/2006 held that there is no superior-subordinate relationship between a civil Director and a Lt Col and that a Lt Col reports only to Col/PD. Similar judgement had been delivered by CAT Jodhpur Bench in OA No 85/2005. MoD, as a 'respondent' in the above cases, had also submitted before the CAT that appointment of Lt Cols and Civil SEs/Directors was equivalent.

Degradation – Who is Responsible? - In the armed forces HQ, a civil services officers cadre was introduced in 1968 at Group B level to help man bureaucratic posts in the lower and middle levels. They provided the required continuity because armed forces officers were posted out every 2-3 years. The issue arose when the civilian officers, realising that the military officers serve only for short tenures and have no say in decision making in the MoD, started positioning themselves in key posts and ensured their

cadre progression by disproportionately increasing the higher posts on their own, without involving the three service HQs in the process.

As per Para 4 of the AFHQ Cadre Scheme, approved vide Cabinet Secretariat Note No DCC/3/68(i) dated 15 Feb 1968, the AFHQ CS CSOs (subsequently re-named as Dy Directors) and SCSOs (re-named as Jt Directors) were granted statuses lower than Under Secretary and Deputy Secretary respectively of CSS. However, slowly the AFHQ civilian officers started equating Deputy Director with a Major and Jt Director with Lt Colonel, by issuing letters through their own officers posted in the office of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The CAO further promoted themselves twice up the chain by issuing letter on 18 October 2016 wherein it sought to equate Jt Director with a Colonel, Director with Brigadier and Principal Director with a Major General (who is actually equal to a Joint Secretary).

Justification of its illegal actions by CAO – CAO has been trying to justify its actions by citing aspirations of AFHQ cadre personnel as well representations from employee associations as the reasons for its various actions. However, increased aspirations of employees cannot be the sole reason for unjustifiably increasing the higher designations. The organisational requirements and functional necessities of services HQs also need to be factored in. As per Charter of Duties of CAO defined by MoD in Chapter II of Allocation of Work 2011 and further amplified at Para 5.22, it is responsible for execution/implementation of policies in respect of AFHQ cadre personnel, and not for defining the policies. CAO has also not been vested with any charter related to uniformed services officers, including defining of equivalence.

However, the CAO has been repeatedly exceeding its defined Charter in unilaterally and arbitrarily laying down the equivalence of AFHQ civilian officers with defence officers as also in processing cadre restructurings by by-passing the PPOC. It has illegally promoted over 50 of its officers as Directors whereas the government has approved only 23 posts of Directors, by calling these as in-situ promotions. All such actions / letters / communications by CAO on the issue from 1987 onwards are therefore, in contravention to existing government instructions.

Who can define Functional Equations in Services HQ? – As per the Charter of Principal Personnel Officers Committee (PPOC), a Tri-Services commit-

tee, approved by the Cabinet and promulgated by MoD vide their letter No F.34(4)/2002-D(O&M) dated 21 May 2002, "the PPOC shall formulate policy on all personnel and administration related matters as delegated to IHQ of MoD which have inter-services implications." "Matters regarding Warrants of Precedence and all dealings of AFHQ Cadre," are required to be dealt/processed through PPOC.

It implies that PPOC is the only designated authority vested with the power to define functional equivalence within the services HQ/tri-services organizations. The PPOC has not only defined the required functional equivalence but has also been repeatedly representing to MoD during preceding years through various communications dated 20 Jun 1988, 31 May 1989, 14 Jun 1990, 19 Nov 1990, 28 Jun 1991, 25 Jul 1991, 19 Feb 1992, Dec 1996, 22 Jan 2001, 28 Aug 2002, 10 Jun 2005 & 17 Nov 2008 for issuing of suitable directions to CAO for not disturbing the same unilaterally. The functional equivalence defined by PPOC and conveyed to MoD through Chairman COSC Note No DMW/35100/1/COS dated 19 Feb 1992 is as under:

- Capt & equivalent - CSO/ Dy Director
- Major & equivalent - SCSO/ Jt Dir
- Lt Col & equivalent - Director
- Cols & equivalent - Under-Secretary

Is it a case of Tail Wagging the Dog? Despite all these clear policies, the Babus of the MoD issued that letter on 18 Oct 2016, lowering the status. They even had the temerity to issue a press statement that the letter was justified as it was an internal arrangement. It also stated that the letter had the approval of the defence minister. And subsequently, on 29 Nov 2016, the RRM was made to give misleading statement before the Rajya Sabha, stating that the 18 Oct letter does not involve down-gradation. This clearly shows that the defence minister is being misled. A similar case has snowballed in the Military Engineering Service where the civilian Engineers have placed themselves above the serving military officers. *A clear case of the Tail wagging the Dog.*

So, how does it happen? One is left wondering as to how such things could happen repeatedly. It is a

combination of various factors, the constant posting in/out of officers in the service HQ with no continuity, vested interests overriding the decision making process, civilian officers associations mounting pressure on the political bosses etc. No military personnel are presently being involved in decision making in the MoD, despite recommendations by numerous committees. Politicians depend heavily on the bureaucrats who are doing the damage quietly.

Is it about money? No! For people in the armed forces it is not about money. If it was, then many would have joined the corporate world where there were lucrative pay packages. Then what is it? It is about honour (Izzat). That is where it hurts most when you see a civilian officer much lower in service being upgraded just because they have an association and can push their way through the political bosses while the armed forces guy, being politically neutral, suffers without any association or a group that he could join.

What should be done? It is high time the decision making process in MoD is set right wherein the chiefs and the defence minister should rectify all the outstanding anomalies, including incorrect fixation of Grade Pays/Pay Levels and denial of NFU, to stop this degradation. The functioning of CAO has to be made accountable to PPOC. Since having a separate AFHQ cadre in services HQ is not serving any purpose, it is time to consider merging it with CSS. Also, HPC needs to be set up at the earliest, in accordance with PMO Directive of Dec 2008, to establish equivalence and command-control issues between uniformed services and civilians. This would help resolve many issues.

A soldier should never be short changed. Because if he returns the favour in kind, then the borders would be unguarded. The enemy within has to be identified and stopped before they damage the armed forces further. The armed forces, as a profession has to be made more attractive. Status, pay and perks are the issues that should be set right. After all, armed forces are the only government service which, when demanded, are ready to sacrifice their own Life.



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AgustaWestland Deal: Opening a Can of Worms

by Maj Gen Mrinal Suman (Retd)



Arrest of a retired air chief is a sad development. The AugustaWestland deal for the procurement of helicopters for VVIPs is in the news once again. The contract has been under the scanner since the arrest of the head of the Italian defence group Finmeccanica, the owners of AgustaWestland, for alleged payment of bribes to clinch the deal. In addition to handing over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation, Ministry of Defence (MoD) issued a detailed fact sheet on 14 February 2013 containing a chronology of the important procedural milestones of the deal.

The much awaited report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) was tabled in the Parliament on 13 August 2013. It has found the entire process of acquisition, right from the framing of Services Qualitative Requirements (SQR) to the conclusion of contract to have deviated from the laid down procedure. Exposing infirmities in every stage of the procurement process, the CAG has sought accountability and raised serious questions about the lack of transparency.

This article endeavours to carry out an appraisal of the whole deal, relying primarily on the report tabled by CAG, fact sheet issued by MoD and the information available in the public domain.

The Backdrop

Mi-8 helicopters of the Communication Squadron of the Indian Air Force (IAF) have been meeting heli-lift requirements of VVIPs since 1988. As Mi-8 helicopter could fly only up to 2,000 meters and that too during day-light conditions and good weather, a need was felt to replace the complete fleet with modern helicopters possessing better capability in

terms of avionics, high altitude operations and passenger comfort.

After evolving SQR in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to 11 manufacturers in March 2002. Importantly, it was mandated that the helicopters should be able to operate at an altitude of 6,000 meters. Although four vendors responded, the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) found three proposals (Mi-172, EC-225 and EH-101) to be compliant and recommended that they be called for trial evaluation.

Only two helicopters were trial evaluated as EH-101 (later renamed as AW-101) was certified to fly up to an altitude of 4,572 meters only. Flight Evaluation Trials (FET) were conducted in end-2002 and the report submitted to MoD in May 2003 for acceptance. EC-225 (Eurocopter Super Puma) was recommended for procurement.

PMO objected to the emergence of a single vendor and directed that SQR be reformulated to generate competition. Further, the Air Headquarters (Air HQ) was directed to co-opt the Home Ministry and the Special Protection Group (SPG) in framing parameters to ensure that all operational, security and convenience requirements are duly satisfied. Consequently, in a meeting convened by the PMO in November 2003, it was proposed to reduce ceiling requirement to 4,500 meters and have a desirable SQR of minimum cabin height of 1.8 meters. As a desirable SQR (since done away with) was simply an expression of wish, it was not a limiting factor and no equipment could be eliminated for its non-compliance.

The Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) mandates that in the event of a single vendor emerging

successful, the case should be aborted and a fresh RFP issued with revised parameters. Hence, the steps taken were in order.

However, in early-2005, powerful decision makers appear to have decided to procure helicopters from AgustaWestland. Thereafter, the whole procurement exercise was reduced to a sham and every single provision of DPP was tweaked to forestall challenges to Agusta Westland. The unbridled audacity displayed by the decision makers is simply unbelievable. The magnitude of the transgression can be gauged by a close examination of the various aspects of the procurement process.

Service Ceiling

As a follow up of the instructions issued by the National Security Advisor (NSA) in March 2005, fresh SQR were evolved in consultation with PMO and SPG. Air HQ had been insisting since 1988 that requirement of service ceiling of 6,000 meters was an inescapable operational necessity to access many border areas. The same was also reiterated to the Defence Secretary in January 2004.

However, in a meeting convened by the Defence Secretary in May 2005, it was decided to lower the altitude requirement to 4,500 meters. Thus, the altitude ceiling was inventively fixed to facilitate the entry of Augusta Westland as EH-101 (AW-101) which could fly only up to 4,572 meters.

Cabin Height

Air HQ considered cabin height of 1.45 meters to be acceptable in view of the fact that flights undertaken by VVIPs are generally of short duration. Strangely, on the insistence of PMO/SPG, minimum cabin height of 1.8 meters was converted from a desirable to a mandatory SQR. It implied that no helicopter with lesser cabin height could be considered for procurement. Although Air HQ cautioned that making cabin height of 1.8 meter a mandatory SQR would lead to a single vendor situation as only EH-101 (AW-101) possessed it, the objection was disregarded.

It made the entire exercise of generating competition a farce as the process was skillfully contrived at the very outset to clear the path for the selection of AgustaWestland as a single vendor. Despite the fact that the earlier proposal had been aborted for resulting in a single vendor situation, the fresh proposal was deliberately perverted at the parameter formulation stage itself. Expectedly, the process led to the emergence of AW-101 as the sole compliant helicopter.

Reduced Competition through Limited Tendering

Whereas the stated purpose of issuing fresh RFP with revised parameters was to generate more competition, MoD reduced the number of invited vendors from the earlier 11 to 6. Consequently, instead of increasing competition, new RFP reduced it. When queried by CAG for this anomaly, MoD replied that limited tendering was resorted to due to security considerations and that the vendors had to be vetted from the intelligence angle. It defies logic. MoD did not clarify as to what fresh inputs it had received regarding their becoming security threats since the issuance of the first RFP.

Additionally, MoD justified the exclusion of five vendors on the ground that they had failed to comply with SQR in the earlier RFP. Again, it was an absurd logic. How could a vendor who was non-compliant in 2002 be considered unfit in 2006 as well?

Location and Conduct of Field Evaluation Trials

Only three vendors responded to the new RFP. The proposal of Rosoboronexport (Mi-172) was rejected for non-deposition of the earnest money and refusal to sign the pre-contract Integrity Pact. Accordingly, Sikorsky (S-92) and AgustaWestland (AW-101) were shortlisted for FET. FET is by far the most critical aspect of the entire procurement process as it aims to validate performance claims made by the vendors in their technical proposals. Attention needs to be drawn to two grave misdemeanours during FET.

First, DPP mandates that FET must be carried out in all conditions where the equipment is likely to be deployed. Even the new RFP had categorically stated that FET would be carried out in India in varying climatic, altitude and terrain conditions on 'No Cost No Commitment' basis. In their responses, both vendors had agreed to it.

Undoubtedly, all vendors prefer to have FET at their own locations as it saves considerable costs and helps them in channelizing trials in the manner that suits them the best. However, MoD never allows it. Most surprisingly, Air HQ accepted the request of both the vendors to hold trials at their respective sites. CAG has highlighted the extent of the pressure put by the then Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) on the Defence Secretary and the Defence Procurement Board. It is not understood as to why CAS was so insistent on carrying out FET abroad. It was a gratuitous demand.

On being repeatedly coerced by CAS, the Defence Minister granted permission with great reluctance in December 2007. However, he cautioned that the trial process should be credible, technically competent

and above board. He directed that the trial directive should give equal opportunity to both the bidders.

CAG's report has revealed that the helicopter offered by Augusta Westland was still in the developmental phase and not ready for trials. Perhaps, it was the reason for its reluctance for FET in India. Undoubtedly, Air HQ was aware of it and decided to bail it out by obtaining sanction for FET abroad.

Secondly, FET is required to be carried out on the equipment being considered for procurement and not a substitute. DPP allows no deviations whatsoever. It is considered a sacrosanct necessity and DPP allows no dilution of this requirement.

In total contravention of the directions issued by the Defence Minister and the provisions of DPP, different methodologies were employed for the trial evaluation of S-92 and AW-101. Whereas FET in respect of Sikorsky was conducted in the USA on the same S-92 helicopter as mentioned in their technical offer, trials in respect of Augusta Westland were carried out in the UK on representative helicopters (Civ-01 and Merlin MK-3A) for different parameters and a mock-up of the passenger cabin.

Most shockingly, AW-101 helicopter was declared fully SQR-compliant. CAG has rightly questioned the methodology of evaluating different aspects of equipment on separate platforms and hoping that the configured machine would satisfy all SQR. In other words, AW-101 was selected without subjecting it to real FET. Can there be a bigger travesty of the procedure?

Additional Requirement

One of the most intriguing aspects of the deal is an increase in the requirement of helicopters from 8 to 12. CAG has found no justification for the same. The Communication Squadron had been managing with a fleet of eight Mi-8 helicopters since 1988 and had never complained of shortage. More importantly, even the first proposal initiated in 1999 sought eight helicopters (five in VIP configuration and three in non-VIP configuration). Accordingly, the first RFP issued in March 2002 was for 8 helicopters only.

However, in October 2005, SPG insisted that the requirement be increased to 12 (eight in VIP configuration and four in non-VIP configuration). MoD accorded sanction for the increased number in January 2006.

CAG has found the procurement of additional helicopter to be unjustified that resulted in a totally avoidable excess expenditure of Rs 1240 crore. It has opined that the increased requirement was not

commensurate with the low utilization levels (29 percent) in the past. It appears that the requirement was increased only after it was reasonably ensured that the order would go to Augusta Westland through the tailor-making of SQR.

Two interesting points emerge. One, whereas it should be for the Air HQ to determine the requirement as it is its responsibility to make adequate helicopters available for the transportation of VVIPs, NSG was allowed to usurp this right. Two, PMO/NSG had been co-opted with the proposal since 1999. They never projected additional requirement till October 2005.

Faulty Staff Evaluation

Staff evaluation is the last stage of technical evaluation. It confirms full compliance of equipment with SQR. DPP specifically debars grant of waiver or amendment to SQR after the issuance of RFP in 'Buy' cases. CAG observed that both the vendors (Sikorsky and Augusta Westland) were not found fully compliant with SQR. However, the Staff Evaluation Report recommended the induction of AW-101.

When queried by CAG, MoD admitted that the non-VIP version offered by Augusta Westland was partially compliant with respect to two SQRs. MoD claimed that the infirmity could be operationally overcome.

The above reasoning questions the sanctity of the SQR. DPP defines SQR as minimum inescapable performance characteristics that are considered essential for the performance of equipment for the designated operational tasks. Any SQR that can be dispensed with or can be 'overcome operationally' should not have been included in the RFP in the first place. It is evident that special dispensation was accorded to Augusta Westland.

Frequent Deviations

To cater for unforeseen contingencies, DPP has empowered the Defence Minister to approve deviations on the recommendations of the Defence Procurement Board. It is an enabling provision that should be invoked in rare and exceptional circumstances.

In this case, CAG has observed numerous instances of deviation from the provisions of the DPP. Even the Ministry of Finance pointed out that the approval of the Defence Minister had been sought for eight deviations, including seeking additional commercial quotation from both vendors, non-compliance of two SQR by AW-101 helicopter, extension of delivery

period from 36 to 39 months, reducing the validity period of the 'option' clause from 5 to 3 years, incorporation of rear air-stairs in the four non-VIP helicopters. requirement of additional items and deletion of active Missile Approach Warning System (MAWS).

As per RFP, vendors were required to provide a warranty of 3 years or 900 hours 'whichever is later'. On the request of the vendors, MoD changed it to 'whichever is earlier', thereby diluting the warranty clause to its disadvantage. Similarly, MoD granted deviation to the vendor by reducing the validity of the 'option' clause from 5 to 3 years. It gave undue benefit to the vendor. An 'option' clause carries a cost penalty as the vendor has to keep his manufacturing facilities functional.

Commercial Negotiations

Perhaps, the most shocking aspect of the whole deal was the slapdash manner in which commercial negotiations were carried out with Agusta Westland. CAG has been scathing in its observations.

Every procurement proposal contains estimated cost of the whole deal. In order to arrive at a realistic cost, DPP mandates that the concerned Service Headquarters must obtain inputs from major vendors through the issuance of Request for Information (RFI). Such a requirement becomes inescapable in respect of systems that are unique in their configuration. Air HQ floated no such RFI.

In single vendor cases, Contract Negotiation Committee (CNC) is required to establish a benchmark of reasonableness of price prior to the opening of the commercial offer. If the quoted price falls within the benchmark, price negotiations are dispensed with. CAG has observed that CNC carried out bench marking of price in an unrealistic manner at 67.4 million dollars per helicopter (without passenger cabin modifications). Resultantly, the following absurdity emerged:

- Estimated cost in the proposal submitted by the Air HQ was ₹793 crore which was duly approved by MoD in January 2006.
- In September 2008 (in less than three years), CNC benchmarked the reasonable cost at ₹4877.5 crore – more than six times the estimated cost.
- Cost quoted by the vendor Agusta Westland was ₹3966 crore. Thus, the benchmarked cost was higher by 22.80 percent.

Even the Ministry of Finance had pointed out that the difference between the final negotiated price and the estimated cost to be abnormally high.

Offsets

As regards the fulfillment of offset obligations, CAG has observed major infirmities. Offsets were allowed to Agusta Westland which were not compliant with the DPP provisions, e.g. creation of infrastructure. Further, there was ambiguity in the offset contract regarding the type of services and export orders to be executed by IDS Infotech (Indian Offset Partner).

Surprisingly, work completed prior to the award of the helicopter contract was allowed to be included in the offset contract – AgustaWestland gave year-wise break up of work for the offset programme from 2011 to 2014 even though the work had already been completed by IDS Infotech well before 2010. It was totally in contravention to the offset policy directions.

Finally

As has been seen above, every act of omission or commission was carried out to tweak the process. One can summarise by saying that the said deal is a fit case study – it provides a road-map for swinging a deal in favour of a chosen vendor:

- Service ceiling was reduced to 4,500 meters as AW-101 could fly only up to 4,572 meters.
- Cabin height was fixed at 1.8 meters. It effectively made it a single vendor case as no other helicopter possessed that facility. Moreover, fewer vendors were invited to limit competition.
- Major deviations were granted to favour the vendor – all to the disadvantage of the buyer.
- Trials were held abroad on substitutes and mock-ups as the helicopter on offer was still under development. Thus AW-101 was declared acceptable without testing it. There cannot be a greater mockery of trials.
- Whereas the Air HQ had projected the likely cost to be ₹793 crore in January 2006, CNC benchmarked it at ₹4877.5 crore in September 2008. Something is terribly amiss.

Unfortunately, CAG report reveals only a tip of the iceberg. The whole deal is mired in irregularities and infirmities. One will not be surprised if the ongoing investigations reveal it to be a murkier affair than the much maligned Bofors. ■



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VVIP Choppers, Aircraft procurement and arrest of former Air Chief



by Air Marshal SY Savur (Retd)



Wrote Isaac Asimov, “People who think they know everything are (a) great annoyance to those of us who do (know).”

Having spent 10 years in VVIP flying duties, with an advantage of having a course-mate as the JD Ops (VIP) coordinating all aspects of VVIP/VIP flights for the air force, followed by 2 years as Air Officer Commanding (AOC) of AFS Palam, one is made aware not only of the operational but also the procedural and technical aspects. This does not make one an expert to offer comment/opinion on the present sensational headlines but remaining silent will betray moral courage to write the truth – that one trait which is considered mandatory in armed forces officers, and one that sets them apart. So here goes!

On the evening of 9th December 2016, I received a call from a TV channel seeking my presence on a panel discussion at 9 pm. Topic, the arrest of retired Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi on suspicion of accepting a bribe to change the Air Staff Requirements (ASR) for the Augusta Westland helicopter.

I regretted inability to add my two bits of wisdom as I was at that time in our house in village just 43 kms away from Bengaluru. The next question from the lady from the TV channel, “Can't we do it on Skype,” jolted me. This was it, if emphasis was at all needed, of how many light years away we, in rural areas even on the periphery of Bangalore, are from those lightning speeds of broadband internet. The internet speed in the village, when there is connectivity, is between 1 and 3 kbps! Let alone Skype, we are rendered cashless digitally by existing connectivity.

But I digress.

Those who are knowledgeable will recall the Tupolev (Tu) 124 was a short haul transport airplane used in VVIP flying duties in Air HQ Comn Sqn from late 1960 till beginning of 1980s. One Tu-124 crashed in Jorhat in 1977 in poor visibility, low clouds, and rain with then PM Morarji Desai on board.

After that crash, a political decision was made to replace the Tu-124, which was the mainstay of VVIP flights. Neither Air HQ nor the pilots flying VVIPs in Air HQ Comn Sqn had any part to play in the replacement aircraft.

Indian Airlines (IA) was flying Airbus-300 and Boeing-737 airplanes. So Competent Authority (that faceless, omnipresent, and ubiquitous entity) decided that a couple of the B-737 airplanes would be purchased for Air HQ. The Competent Authority, and 'they' were not in Air HQ, also decided that those two airplanes would fly on commercial flights for a couple of years and then, after overcoming teething troubles be handed over to the Air HQ Comn Sqn for VVIP flights.

Therefore, two B-737 airplanes were purchased and flew under DGCA registration for 2 years, including for the CHOGM, before being inducted into the IAF. In 1989, then PM asked to examine the feasibility of modifying the B-737 airplanes to fly him on flights abroad because, in his words, “use of the B-747 of Air India was drawing too much adverse publicity because of disruption of commercial flight schedules!”

It was pointed out to him that the B-737 400 might be a likely choice but he would have to make do with a

seating capacity of about 60 to facilitate extra fuel tanks, as compared hundred or more passengers in the palatial B-747.

This was nixed by the Special Protection Group (SPG), who said they needed about 2 dozen seats for their personnel. However, in true traditions of the armed forces, this conversation was reported up the chain of command to then (now late) Air Chief Marshal SK Mehra. Besides drawing his (apoplectic!) reaction that the PM should discuss this with Air HQ Comn Sqn, nothing more was heard of either from Air HQ or from the PM.

For the next two months, after every flight of the PM was followed by a thorough de-brief on what transpired in the flight(s). In the process of my to-and-fro to Air HQ, I learnt the following:

The decision to replace the Tu-124 with B-737 was taken at a political level. Advice on the B-737 airplane was provided by the experienced pilots and management of IA. [One is personally aware that the decision to entrust IAF pilots with VVIP flights on B-737 airplanes was a matter of intense discussion. IA's management opined that their pilots had more experience and that IAF's pilots should return to 'Air Force' flying. This continued till 1987 when then PM took the decision that IAF pilots would fly VVIPs.]

Induction of Mi-8, and subsequently Mi-17 into Air HQ Comn Sqn was based on the decision of the Competent Authority of the day, which also decided on the number and configuration of the (to be purchased) Executive Mi-17/8 for VVIP flights. [Three Business Jets (B-737 modified versions) languish in Air HQ Comn Sqn hangars, sporadically flying the VVIPs inside India. The Air India B-747 (with the grand call sign 'Air India One') still flies VVIPs abroad!]

The entire chronology in the Augusta Westland helicopter induction is available in the public domain and repeated by Rajiv Tyagi elsewhere in Facebook and hence repetition is avoided here.

Now, what does the above have to do with the Augusta-Westland and ignominy of 3 years of investigation/innuendoes? And now the arrest of a retired CAS? First, the ASRs including ceiling and passenger configuration etc. would have been discussed at the highest levels of the government and approved at that level. No CAS, even for a couple of

million Euros, will tamper with the approval of Competent Authority because questions would flow faster and more violently than an avalanche gone berserk in Siachen!

With knowledge of 'approval of Competent Authority' in mind, no armed forces officer, even a CAS, will decide to change the requirements without approval from that Competent Authority. Therefore, to presume that ACM Tyagi changed the ceiling from 6000 metres to 4500 metres is likely to be proved to be contrary to existing facts in the long term but at considerable loss of prestige to the country, the armed forces, the Indian Air Force and finally to ACM Tyagi.

One is also aware that the SPG has encroached outside its area of responsibility. In 1987-8, then DD of SPG (Mr Suri) informed the crew flying the PM that their luggage would be inspected by the SPG. It needed the thumping of the 'Blue Book' and intervention of the Director, SPG to restore status quo ante.

In another instance, the same DD SPG insisted that SPG personnel would board the VVIP aircraft with their weapons loaded. Again, this was contrary to the rules in the 'Blue Book' governing VVIP flights. We tried to reason with SPG that an 'accidental firing' could lead to explosive decompression, with avoidable serious, even fatal consequences. It was decided that the matter would be discussed at the next meeting.

Next morning, the newspapers narrated the unfortunate incident of an Air Hawaii B-737, which suffered an explosive decompression. In that incident, a cabin attendant and a couple of passengers were sucked out. This was brought to the attention of Director SPG. Once again status quo ante was restored.

These are brought out to show that the possibility cannot be ruled out of the SPG deciding on other than security parameters (i.e. the height of the VVIP cabin as has been alleged). That brings one to the questions that lakhs of ESM are asking anyone with truthful answers – where were the Competent Authority of the politico-bureaucrat-SPG-Defence Finance-Min of Fin while ACM Tyagi allegedly “prevailed” in favour of Augusta Westland and his cousins?

Somnolent? ■



Air Marshal SY Savur was commissioned in 1966 in the transport aircraft stream of the General Duties (Pilots) later Flying (Pilots) Branch of the Indian Air Force. He retired in 2006 as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Southern Air Command. He has been decorated by the President with Ati Vishist Seva Medal (AVSM) for distinguished service of an exceptional order and the Param Vishist Seva Medal (PVSM) for distinguished service of the most exceptional order. He lives in Bangalore and writes frequently on issues pertaining veterans and his experiences in Air Force. He also runs a blog - sharad10525.blogspot.in. He can be reached on Email: sysavur@gmail.com

More on Agusta Westland-101 with extra twists



The new Italian Government went for its jugular, and this is repeated here as UPA lost badly but is not tamed. Finmeccanica head was arrested and jailed. The Intelligence Police Chief of Italy took over Finmeccanica to protect its biz and muzzle matters. Italian money politics are like in India and intertwined. PM Modi is determined to eradicate this thru Demonet, and he will succeed if it is peaceful and suffering by the lower and middle class is borne out, and media is kept busy with Cat's Paws. Growth rate can wait, but a win in AW-101 and in UP is critical for BJP to rule right wing. Bofors ruined Rajiv's government, though in full authority.

by Cmde Ranjit Rai (Retd)



Research is not Indian's forte. No Indian University or think tank is rated, but high IQ and guile with caste and a crafty huge population and India's Dhanis for consumption and NRIs is India's forte. It is in Indians - *Why we are - What we are!* India can be unstoppable with good honest enlightened leadership.

With a brilliant civil service which is not a stake holder in national security, and politicians for their constituencies, they are the permanent Iron Class with signatory powers on files and money sanctions. CAS is thus a Cat's Paw in AW-101 scandal as many are caught in Adarsh too.

Cat's Paw is a phrase derived from La Fontaine's fable, "The Monkey and the Cat", referring to a person (CAS) used unwittingly or unwillingly by another to accomplish the other's own purpose.

No nation can stop the rise of India's 1.3 billion people, which worries China and USA seeks to seal India in to a defence partnership with its technology on offer as bait, as a Cat's Paw to keep China in check. China uses Pakistan as its Cat's Paw to respond. So the ex-air chief has to bear the brunt as the ex-PM and his aides to join the mega AW-101 investigation.

So much is written about the AW-101 extracted from CAG reports, articles and internet that I admire

TPS, Arun Saighal and Maj Gen Mrinal for re-telling us all, for the spice!

But now the reply to Letters Rogatory will have to be answered and faced by those in custody under duress, who may know the ₹450 Crore money trail (especially a Khaitan) which, NDA has pursued with vigour. The CAS is a Cat's Paw, which is an essential ingredient trapped in the journey.

It also hints how the Italian court used India's AW-101 in a political battle as a Cat's Paw in Italian elections when Berlosconni was involved or possibly funded by Finmeccanica from such kick back funds. Berlusconi lost.

The new Italian government went for his jugular, and this is repeated here as UPA lost badly but is not tamed. Finmeccanica head was arrested and jailed. The Intelligence Police Chief of Italy took over Finmeccanica to protect its biz and muzzle matters. Italian money politics are like in India, intertwined.

PM Modi is determined to eradicate this, and he will succeed if it is peaceful and suffering by the lower and middle class is borne out, and media is kept busy with Cat's Paws. Growth rate can wait, but a win in AW-101 and in UP is critical for BJP to rule. Bofors ruined Rajiv's government, though in full authority.

So far no money trail has ever been unearthed in any

defence deal. Having written a book on Adm Vishnu Bhagwat with JAG Brig RP Singh with research and solid legal inputs from brilliant lawyer late GB Pai and his lawyer grandson on Art 310/311 and its misuse to sack him, it was banned by former RM George Fernandes and sold as 'raddi'. It was a reply to Wilson John's book and papers circulated to MPs from a Kotla printing press and we learnt who funded it all.

We both learnt how political power and the arms lobbies manipulate the simple armed forces (SQR, minor freebies, appointments and promotions, Ambassadorships etc.).

Vishnu thought he could change it. NDA shocked him with RAW/ARC and MoD Sec and Addl sec as the Cat's Paw. They both headed UPSC and other Ministries later.

During Adm Joshi's reign, the DPP's L 1 system made sure all sorts of equipment went in to old aging submarines from cables, different masts, panelling and periscopes. But Adm Joshi took the blame and resigned in a huff when two 25 year old subs had accidents, waiting to happen. RM Antony acted with lightning speed to meet PM and Joshi became his Cat's

Paw. No CNS was appointed for months!

The first person Joshi phoned was Bhagwat after resigning. He was TASO on INS Ranjit since Odessa and that is another tale.

Democracies of variety can run pretending rule of the people with Julius Caesars, Brutuses, Mark Antonys, Dengziao Ping, Xi Jinping, Marcoses or the Gandhis with guile or as dictators when in absolute power and a nation gets the government it deserves. But absolute political power is the aim of every government and its leader. Ashoka killed millions in wars to get absolute power and then ruled with compassion and adopted Buddhism! His past is forgiven.

Even before Trump takes over, he is flexing his political muscles, (some even embarrass Obama) to remake America great he claims. US residents have unbounded powers and is relying on Military in his cabinet and Republican majority!

Will India ever get a CDS so he can be consulted or who will be two new Chiefs, is the next issue occupying the brass as the nation will celebrate Victory Day on the 16th! ■



Commodore Ranjit Bhawani Rai (Retd) served in the Indian Navy, commanded four ships and the Naval Academy. He served twice in the NHQ as the Director of Operations and later Intelligence. He also served as Defence Adviser in Singapore. Leaving Navy prematurely, he attended IIM (Ahmedabad) for Shipping Management. After US flagged ships withdrew to war in Iraq, he took to writing, broadcasting, and conferences. Author of four books, his avocations are TV commentary, golf and supporting his wife's inbound tourism activities. He specializes in defence and strategic affairs. He holds an M.B.A in International Business from the Maharishi University of Management, Iowa, USA. He can be reached at Email: ranjitrai123@gmail.com

Exercise Ekuverian



Joint training conducted on Amphibious Ops conducted in Maldives

Salyut* to India's First Astronaut

by Sagat Shaunik



* Reference to his spacecraft



India's first astronaut took to space in 1984 when 35-year-old **Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma**, spent nearly eight days on board Salyut 7, with a two-member Soviet team. The Sqn Ldr's work was centered on India's remote-sensing capabilities and biomedicine research. Later, as a Wing Commander, he joined Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bangalore, from where he retired with honour in 2001.

Being India's first spaceman, he was bestowed with the nation's highest gallantry award not in the face of enemy that is the coveted 'Ashok Chakra'. He is also a recipient of the 'Hero of Soviet Union-1' an equivalent award from erstwhile USSR (now Russia).

Indira Gandhi who was the Prime minister at that time was overjoyed on hearing Sharma's reply to her question on how he perceived India from space. His prompt reply was a quote from Iqbal, 'Saare Jahaan Se Achcha', meaning the *best in the Universe*.

'Fauji India' interviewed him on 17 December 2016, a special date in Indian history marking 45 years after the defeat of Pakistan, the Liberation of Bangladesh and surrender of 93,000 Pakistani PoWs. He had participated as a combat fighter pilot during the 1971 war.

Wg Cdr Sharma narrated his vivid experiences with a lot of nostalgia, pride and a sense of duty done for the nation. Interesting extracts from our long conversation have been detailed as under:

Why did you select the IAF as a choice of profession?

I was born in Patiala and brought up in Hyderabad. My Uncle served in the IAF and showed us around his Squadron with great pride. The delightful site of fighter aircrafts parked in hangars inspired me. So I decided to opt for the Air Force as a career.

Later, I was commissioned in No. 1 Squadron "Tigers" flying Mig 21s located in Adampur in the Western Sector. Being junior with limited flying hours I was assigned to fly 'Air-Defence' missions only, as 1971 war clouds loomed I was to prepare for interdiction and ground attack roles. It was an exhilarating experience. I flew combat sorties across the International Border to make Pakistanis react to us when we flew over their air bases. They refused to take off and fight with us. I was part of bombing multiple runways and it was a very trying time. Those were my first combat sorties...

How were you shortlisted and selected for the Space Program?

After the war, I continued training on my aircraft with the Squadron. Initially some feelers were given, suggesting that there was some hush-hush project and you need to volunteer. There wasn't much choice so I had to. Immediately, medical tests were started, some of which, an ordinary IAF pilot would never have ever undergone throughout his career. It sort of gave a feeling that we were up to something.

Thereafter, I was posted to HAL as a volunteer test pilot in 1975 as both the IAF and HAL 'wanted to catch them young'. We underwent rigorous physical and mental training exercises, besides flight tests in the run up to the major event, which was still unknown.

Finally, it came down to Sqn Ldr (Later Air Commodore) Ravish Malhotra and me. We both knew that it would be either one of us. That was the only certainty and we were both prepared for the bitter truth. Yet our training continued while our friendship grew. In fact, recently we celebrated his 70th Birthday at a wonderful family get together.

Your mission was set in the Cold War era. What was the atmosphere around you during the entire period?

I had a Diplomatic passport, from Monday to Friday we were at Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center (GCTC), Star City, Moscow area. On weekends, through interaction with our Air Attaché we attended various meetings, lunches and dinners within the diplomatic community leading to further invitations from other diplomats. There used to be this gentle pampering for information as everyone wanted to know what we were up to. We were all too aware, but pretended to behave less aware and feigned ignorance. The American Air Force Association was especially interested in our current activities with Soviet hardware as also our combat experience with Russian made MiG-21 and Su-7 in the 1971 war against American-made Pakistani fighters i.e. Sabre and Starfighter. Indeed it was an exciting time to be living in!

Can you share your experience in space?

We were so engrossed in our mission that I always cherish the desire to go back as a tourist in a spacecraft. Our crew caught glimpses of the huge world outside from small windows where we could see the expanse of the universe, yet we were mission critical. Every individual had a role to play and for me, each second counted as a lot of Indian taxpayers' money was spent in my training and our mission. I was very aware of the huge responsibility bestowed on me by every citizen of India.

Now, I would like to go there as a curious person who just wants to explore and not be answerable for any mission. You know, up there, one asks what is the curiosity of this blank open space? There is so much to see! Speed becomes a reference of the sensation of things going past. Everything gently passes by! One feels nervous about what is in one's control because you are responsible for that. In space, the computers take over. So I learnt that when you are in not in control of something or the situation, why worry about it?

Further, in a truncated response to other questions, he said, "not believing in the extra-

terrestrial is a typical ignorance of the human race".

You returned to an operational fighter squadron after the space mission. What was happening at the time?

Yes, I was posted to No 14 Squadron, flying Jaguars on 'strike-roles' in Ambala. That was what I truly wanted. Flying a fighter aircraft was my deepest passion and I always wanted to return to the taxiway, get to the runway and take off. In the air, man and machine are united. The thought that you are preparing to defend India at all costs makes you think about all the people who have placed high hopes in you.

As a former test pilot, what are your thoughts on LCA Tejas?

After No 14 Squadron, I returned as a test pilot in HAL. I wanted the Tejas to be the 'pinnacle of my career' but it turned out that the program had outlived my service-tenure. I retired before the aircraft was fully operationalized, I really wished to be a part of the first indigenous Light Combat Squadron!

Where do you see the future of ISRO and India's Space Program? What kind of commander / leader do we need for such ambitions?

I don't want to take away from ISRO, all their achievements and service to India. But, I feel that there is a lot that can be done to help their cause. We must support many endeavours and encourage our youth to take up 'Space' as a field of study, research and so on, regardless of the demanding nature of the job. India has proven its 'space programs'

capabilities in multiple ways that are known to everyone. So, let us all endeavour to take further steps that can maintain and enhance our program, so that future requirements are met in the best possible manner.

For a commander or leader of such ambitions, we need a person who is empathetic, can take the team forward and motivate every individual to put their best foot forward. Such a person can come from any walk of life, but the emphasis has to be on being a 'team-player' otherwise a demanding program such as Space,



Spaceman Wg Cdr Rakesh Sharma with Fauji India Team, Left to Right: Pramod Chavan, Sagat Shaunik, Rakesh Sharma and Prasoon Kumar

cannot manifest in to something larger.

Should India set up a National Space Administration and IAF be allowed to lead or should it be a joint command?

The need of the hour is to prepare a vision document having perspective plans on what the Space Administration could be. We must expeditiously move towards achieving that. Decide your intent and state it clearly. The incumbent government must reinforce that intent by flushing in funds. The organisation must be made accountable for the intent and if they don't deliver, then they should also be taken to task for the matter. That is the way to move forward. It doesn't matter whom heads the organisation, but we must start creating a vision document of where we are headed and what we want to be. That's the best way to at least start moving forward.

You said that India looked 'Saare Jahan Se Achcha'? Why did you quote Iqbal for that answer? Do you still believe in your statement?

Yes, that is how I visualised my Country. Quite simply stated, we have the template about where the world should be going. That is part of our philosophy but we have lost it. Today, when we say that we must return to this philosophy, it has become so politicized that returning back to our roots is being seen as religious Hindutva. But we must remember that Hinduism is a way of life, not the way it is! That is why I still believe India is great. We just need to reflect upon and recognize what our great sages have left for us.

Prior meeting, we learnt that a paan-wala from Ahmedabad, annually greets you on three occasions. Who is he?

"Kailashsinh Hirasinh Chauhan" (exclaims proudly) from Sangam Paan House, Opposite Haveli Ni Pole, Raipur, Ahmedabad. He sent me a greeting card on my space mission's first anniversary. That is when I remembered that it had already been a year, as his card just arrived on 1st April and from then onwards, he has always sent me one card for my birthday, one for new years and one for every space anniversary.

I had never met him in person and decided to meet and greet him at least once in my life as and when the opportunity presents itself. A few years ago, I was in Ahmedabad and I decided to meet him. I went uninformed lest he lay too many arrangements. I wanted to keep it simple. I went around town and inquired

about Sangam Paan House. I went there, presented myself as 'Rakesh Sharma' and shook his hand. He couldn't believe his eyes. We both stood at attention and he didn't utter a word. As the moment set in, he sent his assistant to dash across to the other shop and get two stools and cups of tea. We sat on those stools in the middle of the street and gossiped as if we were childhood friends, while sipping hot tea. It was a beautiful time. Soon a large crowd gathered as everyone learnt who I was.

While parting company I thanked him for his hospitality and greeting cards. What a humble man he was, with such a great heart. Then, I informed my hosts about him and soon a correspondent-journalist came to report his story. The next day there was a long queue at his shop. I may forget my birthday or space anniversary, but he always remembers!

Taking a cue from your experiences and interactions with us, we want to know how you managed yourego?

Initially, I was overwhelmed by the entire space experience. Suddenly, everyone wanted to shake my hand, take my autograph, click pictures with me and associate with me. But, I didn't want all of that. All I wanted was to be airborne and fly for India. When I touched down after the space mission, I knew that the mission was not over as the responsibility of sharing my experience with the world in the correct way, began. So this duality of thought was troubling me sincerely.

I had the good fortune of meeting a noted Indian Philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti, who heard my problem carefully and advised, "It is not *idolation of you*. It is the public response to the image created of you".

That is when my problem was solved. I decided at once to learn to separate my dreams from the public image of me. Often people made special requests to the Air Force to have me come and inaugurate various activities or to chair them. It sort of made flying difficult, but I fought tooth and nail to retain my wings. I am the only astronaut, to the best of my knowledge, who returned to active test flying after a space mission. I also accepted responsibility as a citizen, who was specially chosen for space, so I had to share my experience with every Indian in the truest sense. I owed them a duty of care, for which I could not be found wanting. So J Krishnamurti's (Renowned Indian Philosopher) timely words found a lot of meaning in my life. ■

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Jammu's Greatest Sons



Serving Captain and Veteran Lt Col Sharak Dev Singh Jamwal, 7 Cavalry

In continuation of the mini-series **Battlefield Tales**, **SAGAT SHAUNIK** of 'Fauji India' brings for the first time, a narrative history of how Lt Col Sharak Dev Singh Jamwal fought in the 1962 War in a rearguard action that bravely covered the withdrawal of the 4th Infantry Division in the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). A veteran of many wars, in his mid-nineties, Col Jamwal is a library of information with treasure troves of history that he recalls with minute details. Read on to know the unsung history of this brave Officer.



Jammu area historically fielded many great warriors owing to its geographic setting and social culture that promotes a rich military heritage. From the famous Dogras to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's armies to the J&K State Force, Jammu has an unbroken service record in different armies to the present day.

Two sons of Jammu stand out in modern history of Independent India. The similarities are strangely coincidental and the fact that both families are known to each other makes for an interesting read. The two sons are Lt Col Sharak Dev Singh Jamwal, 7 Cavalry and Maj Som Nath Sharma, PVC (Posthumous) of 4 Kumaon.

Both officers were born in Jammu to fathers who had fought in the First World War and both been mentioned in dispatches. The sons were sent to public school for receiving higher education and decided to opt out by independently writing to their fathers that they intended to join the army. The boys were united at the Prince of Wales' own Royal Indian Military College (RIMC) Dehradun. While Som joined from Sherwood College, Nainital a year earlier; Sharak joined up from The Doon School. With similar backgrounds and leanings, it was natural that Sharak would look up to his senior.

They were commissioned during the Second

World War and saw action in the eastern theatre. Som earned a Mention-in-Dispatches (MiD) in Arakan, Burma, while Sharak performed gallantly with his light tanks in Burma right up to Japan as part of the British Indian Division (BRINDIV) and served with the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) as part of the Allied Occupation Forces in Japan.

Their story developed further when they returned to fight for their homeland J&K their birthplace. Maj Som Nath Sharma posthumously earned the Nation's first PVC and his story is well known. On the other hand, Capt Sharak Dev Singh Jamwal on his way up in to J&K first supported an Infantry Company where his troop leader Jem Kartar Singh earned his first Vir Chakra. Then he reinforced Srinagar with his Stuart Tank Sqn, which was later pressed in to service for the recapture of Jhangar where his CO Lt Col Rajinder Singh 'Sparrow' earned his first MVC. Interestingly, during the battle 2/Lt Rana Raghoba Rane earned his PVC while defusing mines under cover of Capt Jamwal's tank's hull.

But the real test of Capt Jamwal was when he relieved a great war-hero Capt NG David, Vrc to command 'C' Sqn 7 Cav around Aug/Sep 1948. Capt Jamwal had barely two years of military service and

went on to create world history by taking his tanks up the eerie Zojilla heights where his Sqn pushed the enemy out through deliberate and accurate armoured firepower that unnerved the enemy at an altitude of 11,575 ft. Capt Jamwal recalls having the proud privilege of writing the citation for Jem Kartar Singh's second VtC. For commanding the Squadron from the front and in to victory, he was awarded a mere mention in dispatches!

Thereafter, Capt Jamwal went on to fight in the liberation of Goa (1961), NEFA (1962) and all other wars of India. In continuation of battlefield tales series, Col JDS Jind, SC, SM of 7 Cavalry offered to join the author in the quest to record the battlefield tales that follow. Incidentally, Col JDS Jind's father Brig DS Jind had fought alongside Col SDS Jamwal in 1947-48, 61, 62 and so on. In fact while interviewing Col JDS Jind and his gallant crews involved in mine breaching operations' in 1971, featured in this series last year; each veteran had suggested meeting their forgotten war hero Col Jamwal Saab who is 95 years old and a regimental hero. The story of Col Jamwal's gallant service in 1962 is now narrated for the first time.

Foremath

October 1962, preceding a number of intrusions at various points, Chinese launched a simultaneous attack in the Kameng & Lohit Divisions of NEFA and in Ladakh. The first assault was made against the 7th Infantry Brigade defending the line of Namka Chu River. Chinese were strongly supported by heavy artillery and mortars whilst Indians were bereft of any supporting fire whatsoever. Left to fight gallantly, they were overwhelmed by the sheer force of Chinese numbers. By 24 October, the main defensive position reverted to Bomdi La in the Dirang Valley. Two Infantry Brigades, 62 and 65 were inducted in the middle of November and having been ordered to move at short notice without any previous warning, arrived in NEFA clad in summer uniforms whilst bitter winter had already set in. The two brigades were deployed at Se La and Senge Dzong, 48 Brigade at Bomdi La and 4 Division Headquarters at Dirang Dzong.

Move to NEFA

On 22 October 1962, 'B' Squadron (Sqn) 7th Cavalry, commanded by Maj Sharakdev Singh Jamwal, was put on alert by HQ Eastern Command. Two days later, orders were changed and the whole Regiment less one Sqn was ordered to move to Misamari in the Brahmaputra Valley.

At that time, the Regiment's 20-year-old Stuart Tanks were in extremely poor state for want of spares

and further deteriorated by their recent deployment in the 'Liberation of Goa' just a year ago. 'B' Sqn made up deficiencies by taking tanks from 'A' and 'C' Sqn. While 'C' Sqn Commander, Maj DS Jind was sent to Delhi Cantonment with an escort party on 25 October to take over rebuilt Stuarts and proceed directly to Misamari.

'B' Sqn reached Misamari on 27 October and concentrated with other troops at Lama Camp near Foothills, wherein RHQ and 'C' Squadron (less tanks) arrived on 30 October. 'B' Sqn received deployment orders from HQ 4 Corps. Orders were to retain its HQ and one troop with HQ 4 Infantry Division at Dirang Dzong (5500 ft); deploy one troop in support of 48 Infantry Brigade at Bomdila (10,000 ft) and another troop in support of 62 Brigade at Se La, a treacherous climb of 13,550 ft).

"Considering it was the worst possible terrain in terms of geography and tanks, perhaps senior commanders may have felt that they could repeat a Zojila again! They may have assumed that the presence of tanks would unnerve the enemy, little realizing that own infantry was already on the run, and this time around, we were facing a professional Chinese Army."

Whilst the ascent to Zojila in Kashmir had been dangerous and narrow, it was confined to a relatively short stretch. In the Kameng Sector of Arunachal Pradesh, the track from the Foothills (1800 ft) winds its way up to 10,000 feet, the highest point, before descending again to the Tenga Valley at 2000 ft, then climbs again to Bomdila at 9,000 ft. Ahead of Bomdila, the track descends to Dirang Dzong (5000 ft) before climbing up to 13,550 ft to reach Se La, from where it again descends to Tawang. And all this within a distance of 200 kms from Misamari to Tawang!

Throughout its length the track was narrow and rugged, cutting through thick virgin jungles on both sides of the road, restricting visibility only to the 10-30 meters of track itself. There were constant dangers of roadblocks due to landslides and steep narrow bends that could send a tank crashing thousands of feet into the ravines below. So far the only vehicles using the track were high-powered 15 cwt (< 1 tonne) Dodge trucks.

Regardless, Maj Jamwal and his 'B' Squadron pressed on dauntlessly. Halfway to Chaku one of the tanks stalled as its engine failed against the steep climb, and had to be left behind. At the 64.5 milestone, Dfr Daya Nand's tank fell over the mountain slope as the road edge collapsed under its weight while negotiating a bend, and fell 3000 ft into the ravine. All the crew except the driver were thrown out and saved by trees and thick undergrowth. The driver Swr Raj

Karan, however, fell right down and was killed. His body could only be recovered on 5 November, after two days of difficult trekking, and was cremated at Misamari with military honours. Dfr Daya Nand, Swr Nepal Singh and Swr Rattan Singh were seriously injured, had to be recovered from trees at different levels.

'B' Squadron reached Bomdila on 11 November, where one troop of tanks had to be left behind under Ris Siri Chand as they were unable to proceed further. The rest of the squadron pushed on to Dirang Dzong, reaching there on 13 November. However, the tanks were practically useless as the strain on the engines had been very great and they were unable to move any further. Crews dismounted to attempt whatever maintenance they could do to restore some mobility.

On 16 November 'C' Sqn had been put on alert to move to Walong 200 Km further east. While Maj D'Souza (2ic) was directed to proceed to Dirang Dzong alone as Ris Maj Karan Singh was indisposed.

Fall of Bomdila

The Chinese launched their next simultaneous attack on Se La on 17 November and the 'B' Sqn troop at Bomdila under Jem Siri Chand found themselves deserted as other units began to withdraw, and his tanks were deprived of infantry protection. Two tanks were captured and Jem Siri Chand made a heroic fighting withdrawal to Chaku. By the time he reached there with his remaining tank, the Chinese had overrun Chaku and the road was blocked by destroyed and abandoned vehicles. The Chinese approached the tank from a spur, which was too high to be engaged by the tank's main gun, but close enough for the Chinese to use short-range anti-tank weapons. Finding it impossible to use his main gun, Jem Siri Chand opened his hatch to use the anti-aircraft Browning machinegun. During the fight that ensued he was shot twice in the shoulder but continued fighting until the tank was hit and caught fire. LD Ramji Lal, Swrs Amarpal Singh and Sawan Mal were killed, but Jem Siri Chand and Dfr Sumer Singh jumped out and fell into a wooded re-entrant from where they were able to make their way around Chaku and were later picked up.

The news of the debacle at Bomdila had not yet reached Dirang Dzong where Maj D'Souza was visiting 'B' Sqn. The first intimation of disaster came through the Divisional Commander himself, Maj Gen AS Pathania, MVC. The famous 4 Infantry Division had suffered a disastrous rout and was in hasty retreat. With no formal orders or briefing from any command-

ers, Brigade or Division. The only orders consisted were of three sentences by a very hastily 'getting away' Div Cdr – *“Try to break through to Bomdila. If you can't.....cover our withdrawal! I am leaving and if you can't get through to Bomdila follow us”*. He nor his troops were ever to be seen again.

Maj Jamwal immediately got his junior commanders together and explained the situation to them. He ordered them to hold ground till last light, to provide rear guard action to the withdrawing troops. In the eventuality of their being separated they should try to make their own way down to Foothills. The five tanks at his disposal were in such poor mechanical condition that they could hardly move, but he ordered Jem Girdhari Lal's troop to advance to Dirang Dzong village, three miles down the road to Bomdila, to estimate the extent of enemy occupation and be in an 'offensive-defence' posture. The troop came up against a road block of abandoned vehicles and took up defensive positions to engage the Chinese who were firing at them from heights to the North of the road. Information was sent back to Sqn HQ and Maj Jamwal came up to evaluate the situation for himself. He found that the road to Bomdila was blocked and the Chinese were in strength in the surrounding hills. He therefore decided to fight on as long as daylight lasted and then pull out in the hours of darkness, using the route from Dirang Dzong to Foothills via Jhumla and Bhairabkunda.

Throughout the heavy engagement, Capt KB Mehta was running from troop to troop encouraging them to 'fight on'.....**“Koi 7th Cavalry ka Jawan peeche nahee hatega”** (No 7th Cav soldier will withdraw). The men stood their ground till dark.

Jem Girdhari Lal was ordered to hold his position from where the troop was bravely pushing the Chinese back. The rest of the Sqn was deployed to confine Chinese to the hills and jungles and stop them from descending into the narrow valleys on either side of the road. The squadron settled down to a dogged fight, and the more adventurous Chinese who tried to cross the road in attempts to surround the Indians were shot down. Jem Girdhari Lal's troop was fighting a magnificent rearguard action, holding their position right up to the last minute, when they were ordered back by the Sqn Cdr. Here special mention must be made of LD Hans Ram, who acted as a messenger between the Sqn Cdr and the dismounted troops in their fighting positions, moving about fearlessly under enemy fire, carrying orders. His gallantry was akin to the example set by the legendary LD Govind Singh, VC!

As darkness set in, the Sqn consisting of three officers, Maj D'Souza (sprained ankle), Maj Jamwal and Lt KB Mehta (seriously wounded in Goa just a year ago and still in pain), two JCOs and 53 other ranks, were brought together and after some discussion, it was decided to break up into two parties. An advance party under Maj Jamwal (the fittest of the three officers), with 9 able bodied other ranks decided to move down the shorter but more difficult route via Jhumla-Bhairabkunda, while the other, under Lt Mehta along with Maj D'Souza would take the longer route to the East. All along the way this group, along with an engineer officer Capt Rawat, collected a number of 'fleeing and lost' men from other units. After much difficulty and some encounters with Chinese advance elements along the way, both parties reached Missamari. Maj Jamwal's advance party on 22 November and Capt KB Mehta's main body by 25 November. It was a bitter experience but the fighting spirit of 'B' Sqn was the only redeeming factor in one of the most dismal chapters in the glorious history of the Indian Army.

Meanwhile, at Missamari 'C' Sqn was ordered on 17 November to move up in support of 4 Infantry Division. They were initially required to go up to Dirang Dzong, but by the time they reached the Foothills, Dirang Dzong had been cut off and Bomdila threatened. Orders were changed and 'C' Sqn was ordered to proceed only up to Bomdila under 48 Infantry Brigade, and reached Sisni on the evening of 18 November, where they harboured for the night.

As there was no space for the tanks to park they were left standing on the road whilst the men huddled in the cold on small ledges for the night. Bomdila fell on 18 November and the Sqn was ordered to return to Missamari for the defence of the airfield. However, Maj Jind was suspicious of the signal, thinking it could be an enemy deception, so no action was taken. With the fall of Bomdila, traffic on the road became heavy with troops and vehicles moving back, and any idea of rest had to be abandoned. At 0300 hrs on 19 November, the GSO 1 (Intelligence) of HQ 4 Corps, reached the Sqn with the second copy of the signal, so 'C' Squadron moved back to the Foothills and was placed under 181 Infantry Brigade.

'C' Squadron stayed at the Foothills camp with 181 Infantry Brigade, hoping that the Chinese would come

down and fight in an area more favourable to tanks, but it did not happen. Instead, the Chinese unexpectedly pulled out.

Aftermath

Unfortunately, the Government decided that no awards would be given for any actions in this Sector, regardless of individual gallantry. The men continued to serve and now live as forgotten soldiers in their ripe old age between late eighties and mid nineties. Perhaps, it is time the Indian Government recognizes the gallant and distinguished service rendered by unsung heroes in their war efforts.

Conclusion

Col Jamwal lives with great pride in his beautiful Jammu home. Well in to his nineties, he received Col JDS Jind and the author while wearing camouflage shorts and an olive green t-shirt. The brave officer recalls every colleague's name, village address, nicknames, the orders that were passed, the map routes taken and every minute detail. He believes his life is a celebration as he showed us his photo albums that were preserved carefully right from his father's childhood to date. Seeing historic formation signs that he had once worn (in to war as well) brought a sense of nostalgia and great admiration for the Officer who sacrificed so much for India.

Col Jamwal inspired his nephew Lt Col Rajendra Singh, SM of 14 (Scinde) Horse to join the Armoured Corps. Interestingly, Rajendra became the second Jamwal to take tanks across mountain passes, in this case Changla Pass at 17,800 ft with T 72 M1, globally the highest height traversed by a medium tank!

Keeping in mind, the warrior legacy of Jammu and Col Jamwal's ubiquitous role, the author suggested that in the ultimate analysis of all his service, especially in 1962, no gallantry award was enough for him. Col Jamwal laughed it off by saying "My brother (Maj Som Nath Sharma) earned it, I am satisfied".

Perhaps it is time military historians review Lt Col Sharak Dev Singh Jamwal's contributions, particularly on securing what we have in Kashmir. Indeed, India is blessed by a valiant unflinching military; and the time is ripe to acknowledge several of our unrecognized heroes. ■

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Quantum Randomization: A Politico-Military Doctrine for India



Answers to our problems lie in implementing a few principles of Quantum Physics. One of the principle is randomness - "One of the most surprising and (historically, at least) controversial aspects of quantum physics is that it's impossible to predict with certainty the outcome of a single experiment on a quantum system. When physicists predict the outcome of some experiment, the prediction always takes the form of a probability for finding each of the particular possible outcomes, and comparisons between theory and experiment always involve inferring probability distributions from many repeated experiments."

by Colonel PK "Royal" Mehrishi (Retd)



Since our Independence (1947) we as a nation are often exasperated and sometimes at our wits end in adopting measures to deal with a hostile and errant neighbour like Pakistan. We have gone through four wars, achieved decisive victory in all, held 93,000 Prisoners of War after 1971, yet the attacks by way of cease fire violations and terror proxies continues unabated at the behest of Pakistan. Do we have a national doctrine to respond to challenges thrown at us? What then is the way forward for the next 20 years?

Our basic problem always has been the predictability of our response. Sample the following:

- We have a no first use of nuclear weapon policy.
- We are a responsible nuclear power.
- We are a professional army who do not commit barbaric acts (like mutilation of a soldier's body)
- We are a peaceful nation.
- In thousands of years of our national history, we have never attacked another nation nor coveted others land or territory.

The overall narrative is to speak/posture from a high moral ground with predictable responses. Anger and over the top exhibition of emotions whenever we are attacked, raucous debates in the media and finally acceptance of casualties as an act of God (karma/kismet/ fate). Is this the response that will get us even a semblance of peace at our borders?

Answers to our problems lie in implementing a few principles of Quantum Physics. One of the principle is randomness - "One of the most surprising and (historically, at least) controversial aspects of quantum physics is that it's impossible to predict with certainty the outcome of a single experiment on a quantum system. When physicists predict the outcome of some experiment, the prediction always takes the form of a probability for finding each of the particular possible outcomes, and comparisons between theory and experiment always involve inferring probability distributions from many repeated experiments."

In all discussions and debates on military doctrine, we hear of our response "going up the escalatory

ladder". This itself is predictable. No one has ever spoken of a response which could be unpredictable, out of proportion (to punish), asymmetrical or in a geographically tangential landscape. Let me explain, a soldier is martyred in Poonch sector, our response invariably is to punish Pakistani bunkers or posts along the LoC in and around Poonch or thereabouts. Our aim seems to contain the cease fire violation by the adversary in the same geographical plane /area.

The first of the Indian military doctrines ever thought and tested in an exercise (Op Brasstacks) was the Sundarji doctrine (1984-2004) named after General Krishnaswamy Sundarji, which envisaged seven holding Corps along the borders and three strike Corps (camping in the interiors) to mobilize and render sledgehammer blows to puncture through enemy defence line and penetrate deep to destroy Pakistan's fighting capability. This as we all know by now came a cropper during Op Parakram, when we took 28 days to mobilize and build up our forces at the border (by then the surprise factor was lost).

A direct fallout of the lessons learnt after Op Parakram was the Cold Start doctrine (2004-2014). This doctrine did not require long period for mobilization and comprised of eight Integrated Battle Groups (IBG) moving directly from designated cantonment areas close to the border to cross the border for "shallow gains" (as opposed to Sundarji's deep strike) so as to have an upper hand at the negotiating table later after the battle is over. Pakistan's threat of use of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) to blunt this offensive has been discussed widely.

Since PM Modi took over office on 26 May 2014, there is some talk of the 'Modi-Doval Doctrine (2014-2016)' which has some fantasy components, more in the realm of imagination than anything in concrete terms for military planning or national security. Quantum Randomization National Doctrine is a holistic doctrine of politico-military statecraft. The essential components are:

- Economic Measures – Removal of MFN status, curtailing trade, disallowing movement of farm produce from Kashmir to POK, economic sanctions whichever can be enforced.
- Diplomatic Pressure – Isolating Pakistan at every world forum, UN resolutions, sanctions, own permanent seat in UNSC etc.
- Geographical Manipulation – Controlling/damming the flow of rivers from upper riparian states. Flooding Pakistan when required. Causing smog like conditions along the borders by artificial means (to be used in conjunction with military operations).

- Leadership Disenchantment – Tailing the top 100, military and political leaders of Pakistan, their bank accounts, assets, properties, children's education, overseas accounts and planting leaks in the press and media with proofs/evidence to create disenchantment in the masses with their leadership of the day. Creating a divide between the Haves and Have Nots, as there are glaring differences in incomes.

- Electoral Interference – Interfering with the electoral process in Pakistan by funding through state sponsored hawala route. Promote India sympathetic candidates and their elections to local and national assemblies.

- Cultural Invasion – Briefing top 20 directors (Films/TV) on need for nationalistic fervor and allowing them artistic freedom to produce movies that project our nation as the promised land of "milk and honey" with great opportunities for leading a good quality of life. Beaming quality serials/programs across the border and getting the population of Pakistan hooked to watching Indian content.

- Satellite Surveillance – Launching more high resolution satellites to watch over activities in sensitive spots over Pakistan.

- Cultivating Allies – Afghanistan, Iran, USA, UK, Germany, France and Japan are natural allies. Russia needs to be cultivated as a bulwark against China. Out of 56 Islamic countries, we need to use internal animosities against each other as our base for nurturing allies.

- Paid News – The world over, it is a known fact that there exists a scope for planting media stories for a monetary consideration. A few upcoming new channels or established reputed old ones are vulnerable to poaching of anchors/news readers for a pay packet. Media planted stories can be used to spread canards to destroy reputations carry out vilification campaigns against established leadership of Pakistan.

- Cyber Attacks – This is the field where we as a nation can excel. From hacking into the Twitter accounts of Pakistan's chatterati to military software to bank accounts everything is in the realm of the possible. A strong cyber cell working under MoD with the best Indian brains, dedicated to excel in their task can achieve out of proportion dividends.

- International Waters – Our navy and Coast Guard should so to say always be testing the waters to breach Pakistan's national waters and constantly pick up fishermen/small boat owners etc. to needle Pakistan.

- Unstable Borders – LoC in J&K, IB in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat and AGPL in Siachen region, should be constantly subject to uncertainty and

instability of our choosing by stimulated border skirmishes, air violations by own air force, drone movements, artillery fire assaults, arming Baloch rebels (those who have a Maratha lineage), nudging Afghanistan to create unstable conditions along its borders with Pakistan and feeding Iran in real time about atrocities against Shias in Pakistan. The more the borders remain unstable, more the Pakistani top military leadership will remain engaged in “dousing bushfires.”

- Joint Exercises – Conducting joint military exercises with Israel, USA, Russia and Japan close to the Pakistan border as military training is a method to send shivers down the spine of the most battle hardened General. One can never guess when such an exercise can turn into a limited operation to take out terror leaders/lay a siege to nuclear assets etc.

- Military Option – The repercussion of provoking the Indian military to strike should be out of proportion to the damage caused. All holding Corps commanders must have the freedom to plan and execute limited operations in their area of influence so as to maintain the high morale and fighting spirit of troops in that sector.

A centrally planned riposte (AHQ level) should follow at place of own choosing, small teams should be equipped with Night Vision Devices and encouraged to cross the borders at will, alignment of LoC should be constantly challenged by our young company commanders and supported by HQs. A small provocation across the border should incite a sledge hammer response from our side. Who asks us to be

rational, measured and calibrated in our response? Punishment for each act of aggression/provocation should be asymmetrical since we are five times the land mass and seven times the GDP of Pakistan we have the right to retaliate with at least five times the force or more.

Our military strategy should be built around unpredictable, decentralized nature of our response, including pre-emptive strikes to take on suspected terror threats that can cause damage to our nation.

Do you know how dinosaurs went extinct? There is an unsubstantiated theory which goes like this, “Smaller animals started eating them at the feet while they were still alive. A dinosaur was so large that the nervous system sent the pain signal from foot to its brain in two days. By that time the smaller animal would have eaten its fill and escaped.” Though this theory may be wrong but the underlying message is clear: We as a nation need to have our response to every challenge/attack, clear and timely to avoid the ignominy of eventually being perceived as soft and becoming extinct.

In the form of hybrid warfare imposed on us by Pakistan, this is the way forward to answer for Pakistan's version of “Death by Thousand Cuts” (Op Topac). India as a sovereign nation reserves the right to utilize one or more, all or some parts of the Quantum Randomization doctrine. Our aim should be to constantly keep their leadership unhinged and guessing on land, sea, air and in space about our next attack, whether in the political or military realm. ■



Colonel PK "Royal" Mehrishi (Retd) donned the military uniform as a young cadet in a Military School aged 10 Years. An alumnus of NDA and active Infantry combat leader for 28 years. He is also a prolific writer, debater on TV, author of books on leadership and a motivational speaker. In addition he is Harvard Business School alumni certified in "Expert Negotiations". He can be reached at Email: pkradventurer61@gmail.com



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

SBI has released arrears calculated upto Nov'16 to around 4.60 lakhs Defence pensioner under Circular-568 on 16th December 2016. This revision is applicable to pre-2006 retirees and arrear is paid from 01.01.2006. Bank has introduced facilities in all branches/CPPCs to provide arrear details to the pensioners

Make No Mistake to Compare Military Ranks with Civil Designation

by Brig Narender Kumar (Retd)



Job of a military commander is to lead soldiers into battle with utmost commitment and focus by an authority bestowed in him by an order of the head of the state. Logic often fails to motivate men in the face of death, thus, the task of a commander is to blind the logic by evoking emotions.

A good commander will always assemble his men and throw them to the wolf. But when he does so, he too leads his group deep into enemy territory leading from the front. Before men went for surgical strike, they all wrote the last letter before crossing over the LOC to be delivered to their NOKs if some of them did not return. Robert Greene wrote in his book '33 Strategies of War', that the best way to motivate men is not through reasons, but through emotions. Manipulation of emotion is the art of military leadership.

Humans are defensive by nature, logic makes them meek, because if soldiers start reasoning the outcome of their actions during war, they will never be able to fight. Logically, it is foolish and absurd to run up a hill when the guns are blazing from top with no place to take cover. Yet soldiers do it every time they are asked to do so, fully knowing the outcome of such acts. It is all about fogging logic by emotions. Soldiers fight under the influence of emotions but the leaders lead them by logic and reasoning. A tactical commander is not blinded by emotions, he knows what he is asking his men to do and what price he would pay. Lt Anuj Nayyar knew before going to his final assault that he will not return back, yet he went with a smile. It is the rank that makes a military leader do what a normal

human being will never do.

Emotion is most essential aspect of soldiering, and the attachment and attraction of a soldier to his rank is infectious and fatal. That is why he carries his rank to his grave and retains it till eternity. Ask a soldier how has he got his first stripe and his answer will be by blood and sweat. Thus he guards his rank with great degree of pride and self-respect. He feels it insulting when someone starts comparing his rank to a clerk, or a section officer or even to a secretary in the government. It is contemptuous and insulting. Ask Special Forces how they earn the dagger with wings. His reply would be by mortgaging his life for the nation.

To go where no human can go, to do what no human can do and survive where no human has ever survived. Those who do not understand what it takes to be a soldier, they may consider soldiering as another government job, but try and live that life for one day and your head will bow in respect. There is lot of pain, sacrifices, physical rigors and mental stress that a soldier is put through during peace and war. There is a streak of ruthlessness in a soldier and his leader, but before they are ruthless with the enemy they have to subject themselves with ruthlessness.

Naik Hanumanthappa survived for six days under 35 feet of snow. It was the ultimate human endeavour. But remember his Commanding Officer did not leave the site till he dug every mortal remains of his men in minus 35 degree Celsius without proper shelter, adequate food and under constant threat to lives of his men and his own. It was the ruthless leader in him that led from the front in a life threatening environment.

Can he be compared to any other government employee how high and mighty he may be? One can't even imagine any other government official performing such act.

A soldier fights along the border and LoC because adversary challenges his authority on the territorial jurisdiction entrusted to him by his superior military authority. His task is to ensure territorial integrity and no loss of territory is acceptable during peace and war. When his authority is challenged he does not wait for the orders, rather he acts. His authority comes from his rank that forces him to act against his enemy even if it means war.

A civilian bureaucrat is often defined by designation and military by rank. Designation means label, name, title and description. Whereas military ranks mean order, level, status and authority. Military leaders command the territory, men and resources at their disposal by their word of command. Whereas bureaucrats only can lay restrictions through proxy and suggest pros and cons. Military commander's word is an authority and he does not issue an order in writing to his men to go to war. In the recent case of surgical strike, no written orders were issued by Special Forces commanders to their men to cross LoC when they all knew the risk to their lives. Men were briefed and orders issued by word of mouth. The men trusted the wisdom of their commanders because of the rank and authority they held. Whereas if a bureaucrat has to get a job done even if it has zero risk to life, he has to issue a government order.

It may appear to be a non-issue for political leadership or bureaucrats to compare military ranks with civilian counterparts, but it is sacrosanct for a soldier. The difference is that when a soldier salutes his superior it means "sir I am ready to carry out your command" and an officer returns the salute by acknowledging that "I will lead you till last breath".

That is why an old soldier never saluted a civilian irrespective of his position because a civilian cannot lead a soldier to war. Comparing a rank with civilian designation is blasphemy but the bigger crime is downgrading the ranks. If a soldier and military commander start behaving like a government servant, the army and the nation are doomed.

No nation can afford their army to behave like a government organization because government is run by rules and wars are fought by defying rules and conventions. That is why military ranks have sanctity and military accretments are prohibited to be sued even by police. Government of India has committed cardinal mistakes of firstly comparing military ranks with that of civilian counterparts and second is that military personnel's have been placed under police officer in the NSG where the police officers have no idea of command of military personnel's that too special forces.

The day elitism is destroyed among the soldiers, that day nation is rendered insecure. It is the greatest disservice a political leader or bureaucrat can do to the nation. A visionary political leader of a nation surrounded by inimical forces would never distract his army by causing imbalance in emotional equilibrium of men and tempering with their pride and status. Any force in a state attempting to erode the morale of army especially at a time when there is war like situation along the borders/LOC is an act of high treason. Military leaders can't be unsettled and distracted from the main task at hand. Those who attempt to do so are furthering the cause of enemy.

We as a nation must remember that Xenophon had said in (Circa 430-355), "Whichever army goes into battle stronger in soul and morale, their enemy generally cannot withstand them." Thus political leaders must prevent endeavours of those who wish to weaken the morale and spirit of the soldier. ■



Brig Narender Kumar is an Infantry Officer with close to 15 years' experience in counter insurgency and anti-terrorism operations having served in Sri Lanka (Operation PAWAN) J&K and North East. He has been part of UN Mission in North Africa and had a tenure in Indian Training Team in a foreign country. He has served as Brigade Major in Western Theatre, Col Administration of a Division and Brig General Staff of an Area responsible for Northern Border. Commanded a Rashtriya Rifles battalion in J&K and Assam Rifles Sector in North East.

He can be reached at Email: narry13@gmail.com

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A Veteran's struggle to get Lt Col TS scale with grade pay of Major



Do you know why ministries file cases in highest court even when they know that ultimately court orders must be complied with? It is a scam, lawyers keep getting court attendance fee at ₹10,000 per hearing per lawyer and there is always more than one lawyer for each case, there are thousands of such cases in AFTs and SC. Where should one go? Veterans die waiting for justice, Rank pay case ran for 18 years. Do we have this kind of time, money, and energy?

by Major Gurdeep Samra (Retd)



We, eleven Majors won a case No. OA 666/2014, RA 4/2016 in the Principal Bench of Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) at Delhi for grant of pension of Lt Col TS scale with grade pay of Major under the provisions of MoD letter dated 21-11-1997.

The judgment was delivered in our favour on 06 Apr 2016. The AFT directed that the order be complied within 3 months, our pension be revised accordingly and we be paid arrears.

Our case is exactly like cases of Maj KG Thomas case No. OA 256/2011, RA 25/2013, CA 12209/2014 and Lt Cdr Bhisham Kumar case No OA 464/2013.

The law in this regard has finally been laid by the AFT and the Supreme Court.

I decided to approach the PM on 29th October, my application PMOPG/E/2016/0406238 is registered on Government portal <http://pgportal.gov.in/>.

Two days later while attending the Delhi High Court's Golden Jubilee function PM thundered that litigation should be reduced but the Government itself is biggest litigant in the country, my hope in the system got rekindled?

The above application was forwarded to Defence Ministry by PMO on 29th October, it is stuck with one joint secretary, PG Coord M Subbarayan, phone no 01123017828, email id: m.subbarayan@nic.in

Phone calls, mails, yielded no result.

I did not stop, wrote another application no

PMOPG/E/2016/0436374 dated 11 Nov 2016, this too is stuck with same bureaucrat.

I wrote once more, directly to the public grievances portal, reference no DOPPW/E/2016/13077 dated 30th Nov 2016, it is stuck with Addl CDA Niranjana Kumar CDA Pensions Allahabad phone no 0532-2421865 and email id cda-albd@nic.in.

Till date I have not received any update on the issue. It is a simple matter but our Government is heartless.

Veterans are made to approach Supreme Court when they win a case in AFT. Readers can check the status as explained above by entering my email ID: prontoits@gmail.com.

Do you know why ministries file cases in highest court even when they know that ultimately court orders must be complied with?

It is a scam, lawyers keep getting court attendance fee at ₹10,000 per hearing per lawyer and there is always more than one lawyer for each case, there are thousands of such cases in AFTs and SC.

Where should one go? Veterans die waiting for justice, Rank pay case ran for 18 years. Do we have this kind of time, money, and energy?

Please make this case viral so that it wakes up the system; it could be you, at the receiving end, some other time.

Please ponder my countrymen; we don't need enemy, he is within.■

Maj Gurdeep Samra (Retd) lives in Ludhiana and is an active social worker too. He can be reached at Email: prontoits@gmail.com

The First China 'Cruise'



Image for representational purpose only

It was impossible to sleep, difficult to eat. Seasickness is very strange. It crippled the most seasoned sailors, and left some of our rawest shipmates untouched but with a ravenous hunger. We ate when our ship crossed into the eye of the storm. This was the strange heart of Winnie. Though dark cumulus clouds massed threatening on the horizon all around, there were clear blue skies above, the sea was choppy but INS Mysore rode it easily. The calm eye of the storm can be anything from 3 to 15 kms wide. We knew that we would have to cross through the eye to the other side of the typhoon, facing its terrifying fury again. But no one mentioned that in the wardroom. In fact there was a strangely serene, almost a philosophical, sobriety among our colleagues. We had survived one part of a life-threatening experience but had to encounter it again in a few hours. I wrote to Colleen saying, "If you get this letter, I have survived." At times like these you take stock of yourself and what you stand for. **COMMANDER HUGH GANTZER (RETD)** narrates an incident 58 years back when he was part of a "Flag Showing" voyage (or cruise) on board the INS Mysore sailing in Chinese waters.



China now claims hegemony over the South China Sea. But 58 years ago, the Indian Navy conducted a Flag Showing voyage across these international waters and was welcomed by the government of the revered Chairman Mao and the urbane Premier Chou En-lai.

A "Flag Showing" voyage, or cruise, is a recognition of a nation's right to sail its warships in those waters. This cruise was historic in many ways. It was the first cruise by the new flagship, INS Mysore; the first under an Indian CNS, Admiral RD Katari; the first to China. INS Mysore was commanded by Capt SM Nanda. Later, as CNS, he would order the attack on Karachi by sea-borne missiles, a naval action commemorated as Navy Day. The second-in-command of INS Mysore was Commander Nanavati who many naval personnel regard as a hero.

It also, and quite unexpectedly, became an assertion of a little-known duty of all defence services' personnel. While many civilians believe that all people

in uniform are required to obey all orders issued by their superior officers, this is erroneous. They are required to obey only the lawful commands of their superiors. This was expressed very clearly by a legal doctrine evolved at war crimes trials which, in effect, said that a Fauji's conscience is the litmus test on whether an order is to be obeyed or not and it rejects the stirring Tennysonian call: 'Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die.' Nazi war criminals claimed that, when they oversaw the mass extermination of Jews, they were merely obeying the orders of their superiors.

The court disagreed. It said, in effect, that their consciences should have over-ridden what was, clearly, a command to commit a monstrous crime against humanity. While this is applicable in cases of grave conflicts of military discipline and morality, the ripples of this doctrine affect the most distant fringes of service life. What our young naval officers did in China was a high-spirited pre-emptive exercise of this

yet-to-be-enunciated doctrine against the diktats of a bunch of humourless apparatchiks of a totalitarian regime.

But, to get back to the narrative.

INS Mysore's 1958 flag showing itinerary covered Singapore, North Vietnam, Hong Kong, China and Japan. We were now anchored in the then British colony of Hong Kong along with the hunkered down American fleet. When the American admiral learnt that we were preparing to sail to China, he warned us that we were heading into a typhoon. We replied that we were not a fair weather navy, and sailed out.

Naval personnel, by the very nature of their service are, generally, better informed than most other Faujis. They are better travelled and live in close proximity with shipmates from all over the country and with varied technical skills. Even the junior-most sailor knew we were sailing into a typhoon. Our meteorological specialists had been quizzed by their shipmates about this destructive storm. We knew that we were in a typhoon-prone area in the height of the typhoon season. We had been told that typhoons form when warm, humid, air rises from the surface of the sea, draws in more air which also rises and begins to spin with increasing force creating fierce winds and enormous, destructive, waves. A 169,000 ton ship had been sunk in a typhoon. INS Mysore was just 10, 450 tons fully loaded. And yet we, 900 Indians, were challenging a titanic storm which, in a little over 12 hours of its birth on 12th July, had grown into a super typhoon with wind speeds of 282 kmph.

Though we knew all this, nothing had prepared us for the fury of Typhoon Winnie. My diary reads: "15 July 1958 - The waves were 25 feet high. The paint was scoured from our sides with the rasp of a sand-blasted, a six-foot steel ladder was twisted like a crazy corkscrew, and a one ton steel cupboard was wrenched off the deck and moved 20 feet. Winnie was one of the major typhoons of the year."

Strangely, I felt no fear. Fear comes when there is hope. If I was washed over-board now, I would die. So would everyone else on board. It was impossible to sleep, difficult to eat. Seasickness is very strange. It crippled the most seasoned sailors, and left some of our rawest shipmates untouched but with a ravenous hunger. We ate when our ship crossed into the eye of the storm. This was the strange heart of Winnie. Though dark cumulus clouds massed threatening on the horizon all around, there were clear blue skies above, the sea was choppy but INS Mysore rode it easily. The calm eye of the storm can be anything from 3 to 15 kms wide. We knew that we would have to cross through the eye to the other side of the typhoon, facing

its terrifying fury again. But no one mentioned that in the wardroom. In fact there was a strangely serene, almost a philosophical, sobriety among our colleagues. We had survived one part of a life-threatening experience but had to encounter it again in a few hours. I wrote to Colleen saying, "If you get this letter, I have survived." At times like these you take stock of yourself and what you stand for.

You might become more religious, or more cynical, or more devoted to your loved ones, or more distant from them. You assess your successes and failures; the things you have done, the things you had failed to do. You evaluate your duties as a citizen. I recalled an MP once asking me "Sub-Lieutenant, don't you think your salary is too much in our poor country?" I had looked at him for a moment and then said "What price do you put on your life, Sir?" He was taken aback "My Life? How I can place a price on my life?!" I had nodded, "The salary you pay us is your life insurance." He seemed surprised, possibly because he had taken our protection as a right not as something to be constantly earned by our netas and babus. Nationalism and patriotism do not consist of flag-waving or chest-thumping. It's in being deeply grateful for being Indian and all that the nation has given to you and your family and friends, and what you must give back.

When we entered the typhoon again it was as fierce as it had been, but now we knew what to expect and it was not as traumatic. Like a threatening animal, it still snarled but it seemed to back away, realising that it could no longer intimidate us.

On breaking through the far side of typhoon 'Winnie', we stopped and repainted and restored our ship to its original appearance. INS Mysore looked almost new when the Chinese pilot boarded us and a Rear Admiral in a frigate led us up the yellow waters of the Yangtze, past cheering crowds, to Shanghai. .

The Chinese welcome was extravagant. We were feted, entertained and hosted at 14 and 28 course banquets. Yet something was not right. Every time we went on a sight-seeing trip, the conductor flipped on a switch on the dashboard of our coach. "They're recording our conversations," said our Electrical officers. Why did they do that if we were their friends?

When a Lieutenant invited a pretty Chinese guide to the only English movie showing in Shanghai, she paled, looked around, and whispered, "If anybody heard you saying, then I would be taken away for rectification!" What sort of friendship was this? Then another incident shook us. Our Fleet's Admiral Chakraverti, and his wife, had been flown from Shanghai to Beijing and were staying in a luxury hotel. Mrs Chakraverti had been asked to travel on board

during our China trip to accompany her husband on social engagements as required by Chinese protocol. All went well till, one evening after a banquet, our military attaché burst into their suite, his finger on his lips, pulled back the mattress on their double bed, and showed them what lay below their pillows. It was a sound-activated tape recorder! We were enraged.

We began to realise that our hosts' theatrical hospitality was a just a scrim-screen, what we would now call 'event management', to cover their bigoted self-aggrandizement masquerading as a perverted nationalism. Though Nazism and Communism were said to be at different ends of the political spectrum, they were both linked by blind totalitarian mind-sets.

19th July - (They) laid out the red carpet again and we went to Hangchow. There was, of course, the inconvenience of being counted, recounted, checked, rechecked and tallied in our buses and on the train. The monuments, monasteries and Lake of Hangchow were beautiful. But, according to the patter of our guides, the Lake has been recharged after Liberation. In fact, all the good things we saw were either made after Liberation, discovered after Liberation, or renovated after Liberation. Apparently, we've not learnt things correctly – China, from what I can gather, had no appreciation of beauty before Liberation!

By this time, our young officers had become irked when our bus was stopped within sight of Hangchow station because, "We have to organize the spontaneous demonstration", as our guides told us solemnly, there was a chorus of "Arre wah!" from some of the Midshipmen and Sub-lieutenants. "What are they saying?" the head guide asked a Commander. "It is an expression of wonder," he translated literally, though not necessarily accurately. When the guide had left, the Commander, sensing a restlessness among our juniors, asked one of the Midshipmen "What are you planning?" The young officer shook his head, "Nothing, sir. We just want to check out all the carriages to see if anything has been left behind." When we got down at Beijing, we saw them walking past the guides in a single file but very far apart. The Chinese seemed puzzled. They asked us to walk past again for a re-count. We asked them what was wrong. One of them said, "Many more people getting off train than getting on." That was impossible.

We looked around and saw what was happening. The Chinese officials probably found it as difficult to

distinguish between one Indian and another as we did between them. Some of our junior officers had taken advantage of this and doubled back, after being counted, re-entered, exited from the train, and been counted all over again. It was the sort of prank expected of Midshipmen. Our seniors smiled, asked them to stop. The bewildered guides were told what had happened and we expected them to treat it as the light-hearted lark it was meant to be, but they did not.

They were furious at this "loss of face" and "disrespect of military discipline", "demeaning of the People's Republic," and other expostulations of righteous indignation couched in flowery language. We were not prepared for their outraged sense of national slight. Probably it was our lack of exposure, at that time, to a dictatorial government. We did not realise that dictators had over-inflated, insecure, egos, were pained to smile, and had a pathological horror of being taken lightly. Reverential awe was the only response they appreciated. It took many appeals to "Hindi Chini Bhai-bhai!" before our Chinese guides simmered down and a diplomatic incident was averted.

Perhaps we should have seen it coming. Our traumatic encounter with the apocalyptic savagery of Typhoon Winnie, which the American Navy had feared to face, had burnished our pride in being Indian. Our nation was only eleven years old, then, still heady with the fact that we had become a Republic under our own Constitution which we had given to ourselves on the 26th of January, 1949. The states were being reorganised to honour our diversity. Our legendary freedom fighters, who had become our leaders, had a great sense of humour: Nehru had congratulated RK Laxman for his caricatures, Time-Life Photographer Margaret Bourke-White had referred to the Mahatma affectionately as "My little Mickey-Mouse." We had absolutely no intention of kow-towing to a pompously self-righteous monolithic state whose citizens, bludgeoned into seamless uniformity, found it painful to smile! Our Midshipmen's shenanigans were an expression of their liberal consciences, their spirited way of showing the true meaning of the freedoms guaranteed by our Tricolour.

There was no better way of showing the Indian flag!

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Commander Hugh Gantzer is a Mussoorie-based freelance writer and writes in partnership with his writer-wife Colleen, they are a celebrated travel writer couple. Hugh was the first Judge Advocate of the Southern Naval Command. He served in the Indian Navy during 1971 operations as well. He can be reached at Email: gantzerhc@gmail.com

Serious Accident, does the Fault Lie Elsewhere?



by Cdr KP Sanjeev Kumar (Retd)



Over a decade ago, I was the Executive Officer of a frontline warship – the missile corvette INS Khukri. Widely acknowledged as one of the most challenging ships to serve as 'EXO', these ships are well known for their compact size and formidable firepower.

Bristling with weapon systems, they partake in all fleet exercises with the same gusto as capital ships albeit with one-fourth the manning. My situation during that assignment, mostly resembled that of Al Pacino in Christopher Nolan's 2002 movie 'Insomnia'. Recently, I had the opportunity to reflect over my tenure through rose-tinted glasses of an aviator accustomed to the privilege of elaborate rules and regulations covering 'fatigue' and 'flight duty time limits (FDTL)'.

Previous Mishaps

I pondered over how fatigue and insomnia are hardly acknowledged as issues on our warships. Often aviators posted on ships become the subject of jokes centred around their mandatory '8-hour beauty sleep' requirement!

In the last decade, Indian Navy has seen several high-profile accidents with many lives lost. A little past midnight of 13-14 August 2013, INS Sindhurakshak, a Kilo-class submarine exploded into a huge fireball while being prepared for an early morning sortie on Independence Day, killing 18 personnel.

INS Vindhyagiri, a Leander-class frigate sank in Mumbai harbour on Monday, 31 January 2011. The frigate commissioned in 1981, hit a merchant vessel near Sunk Rock lighthouse on Sunday, 30 January, as it

was entering harbour after a 'day at sea' for families of sailors and officers.

Explosive Mix of Fatigue and Operational Pressure

In 2010, a crew member onboard INS Mumbai was instantly killed when a close-in weapon system went off in harbour during drills. Having known key officers on that ship, I am aware of an explosive mix of crew fatigue and relentless operational pressure that was surging in the run up to that accident, which was ultimately blamed on violation of SOPs and human error. Nobody acknowledged fatigue, publicly at least. This is the latest in a series of accidents that have plagued the Navy, showing no signs of waning, despite the resignation of Navy Chief Admiral DK Joshi in February 2014.

The Understated Rationale

While all the inquiry reports submitted till date have assigned blame on ageing platforms, technological obsolescence, all-encompassing human error etc., the likely contribution of fatigue has been understated or completely brushed under the rug. Not surprising in a navy that is numerically smaller than other services but prides itself on working harder than others to stake claim to a greater proportion of the defence budget. Unfortunately, in our culture, safety and comfort become easy casualties in the 24/7 operational tempo. Working over weekends and holidays, sailing out on Fridays and returning to port on Mondays, disproportionate balance of work between afloat and shore agencies, poor habitability on ships – the list goes on.

When Exhaustion is Treated as a Taboo

We have no doubt improved habitability on our ships compared to the 80s and 90s. But have we allowed our officers or men to soak in these modern luxuries for rest and recreation (R&R)? I think not. As a commanding officer or operations staff at HQ, it is taboo to even acknowledge that people on our ships and submarines may be way too tired. While exercising with foreign navies, it is not uncommon to find sailors lazing around in their trunks on the upper deck on a holiday. Our sailors will usually be hanging down the ship's side, applying an extra coat of paint to improve the ship's appearance under the Nelson's eye of senior officers who have been groomed under the same culture. Quite a few officers may be working on infructuous PPTs or curating functions.

Consumed by Relentless Orgy of Exercises

As an example, imagine the number of things running in the minds of officers and sailors as they prepare to embark on a two-month, cross-coast deployment early next morning. Who wouldn't want to spend an extra hour with families or hang out in the bar? I have been through this. So have many others. When we sailed early next morning, more than 75 percent of the ships company and officers had hardly slept a wink. Soon after leaving harbour, we were consumed by the relentless orgy of exercises that have come to define our fleet deployments. Who is keeping account of fatigue and its unseen hand in errors of judgement that may arise in such situations, only to be classified as human error in subsequent inquiries?

Working on 'Inherited' Tasks

Ships undergoing maintenance refits have a different bag of woes. Since refits are mostly dockyard responsibility (on paper at least), the ship is an easy target for communal duties that operational ships cannot fill. Ships in dockyards work under immense stress caused due to extremely poor habitability conditions, extraneous secondary duties, poaching of manpower by higher formations, and finally 'inherited' tasks, which are actually the responsibility of dockyard and its civilian workforce (who incidentally are unionised and governed by more elaborate and protectionist rules).

Added to this is the fact that the tenure spent on a

ship in refit does nothing to your career and is a thankless duty as far as promotions and ACRs go. If all this doesn't cause fatigue and propensity for errors, I don't know what will. In an article that appeared online (Timing is everything: Watching the clock may hold a clue to the INS Betwa accident), Girish Shahane draws some interesting inferences from the work-sharing equation between dockyard and refit ships and timing of the Betwa accident, lunch hour on a Monday. This was from his experience of filming a documentary two decades ago in the same dockyard. I couldn't help but relate to his plausible, but as yet unproven hypothesis. But sadly, even after two decades, the service will be loath to acknowledge fatigue as a factor in this or future accidents.

'Make and Mend' or 'Rest and Recreation' Policy

Navies do not work Monday to Friday. Or 9 to 5. Neither does the adversary. That is not my case. Watch systems, manning plans and degrees of readiness were all formulated to ensure an equitable distribution of work and rest.

But at play is a serious disorder where 'one-year syndrome' and 'zero-error syndrome' have contrived to ensure that personnel on our ships are often fatigued and sleep deprived to insane levels. The hierarchical structure and 'yes boss' culture don't allow for R&R in the true sense that our predecessors ordained while framing the rules. 'Make and mend' – an age old naval routine where sailors are allowed an afternoon off to attend to their clothing or as a period of leisure without set duties, is observed more in the breach today. As we aspire to become a blue water force, a change in mindset at all levels is perhaps in order.

Weapon firings, overseas deployments, multilateral exercises, docking, undocking, annual reports – it's all very well. But let us also give our officers and men time and freedom to put on a hat, extend a fishing rod over the side and read their favourite book as often as we can. The man-hours 'wasted' in these idle pursuits may well reap unimaginable payback by way of accidents averted by alert crew members – just like in aviation.

Material fatigue can cause dock blocks to collapse and keel-over ships. So can human fatigue. Who is measuring the latter? ■



Cdr KP Sanjeev Kumar (Retd) is a former navy test pilot and served the Indian Navy for 23 years. After taking premature release in 2014, he now flies helicopters in the offshore division of a leading helicopter Services Company based in Mumbai. He blogs at www.kaypius.com and can be reached through his website or on kipsake1@gmail.com. Views expressed in this article are personal.

Reflections on the loss of my Fauji son



MAJOR AKSHAY GIRISH KUMAR (Son, Hero, Martyr), 51 Engineer Regiment of the Bengal Sappers, died fighting terrorists in Nagrota on 29 Nov 16. Leading a QRT (Quick Reaction Team), he helped save the lives of 16 to 18 people including women and children but he could not save his own life. He comes from a family with a tradition of serving in the armed forces. His father retired as a Wing Commander from the Indian Air Force while his grandfather retired as a Colonel from the Indian Army and is an 88-year-old veteran of the Garhwal Rifles. Maj Akshay Girish (31) is survived by his parents, wife Sangeetha, three-year-old daughter Naina and his twin sister Neha. His grieving Fauji mother, an accomplished writer herself, shared her feelings on social media. It poignantly reflects how a mother braves the martyrdom of her son. It is a touching saga of coping with personal loss and yet keeping the nation ahead. It should inspire millions of Indians!

by Meghna Girish



If a million questions were thrown at me for a mammoth memory test today, I would get the perfect score, so long as the subject is 'Akshay Girish'.

I know my post said Akshay's story would start with his birth but as I get down to writing this, my thoughts take me further down memory lane – to the time I was pregnant with our first child. It was 1985 and Girish and I were in Gorakhpur – a fairly large, typically backward Uttar Pradesh town bordering Nepal, and also an IAF base for new fighters squadrons.

The pregnancy had been a difficult one from day one. In my 6th month, after I was very ill with an undiagnosed fever for over a month, haemoglobin had dropped to 6 gm and foetal heart was weak. The doctors, Girish and my parents had me shifted from Gorakhpur to Bangalore for further investigations and treatment. At the Command Hospital in Bangalore, I started responding well to antibiotics. An ultrasound in my third trimester shocked us. I was carrying twins

– something I didn't know for 7 months! The Gynaecologist patiently explained to me that I had to be immediately hospitalized for the remainder of my pregnancy because of PIH (pregnancy induced hypertension) and possible foetal distress. Inadequate blood supply was affecting the growth of one baby more than the other.

I had the best round-the-clock care in the Command hospital with the foetal heart being monitored every 4 hours. When Dr Dey told me that waiting for the full term would endanger the life of my baby, I asked no questions and reposed my complete trust in his judgement. He decided to terminate the pregnancy at 35 weeks and Neha and Akshay were safely delivered via a C Section on 6th Dec 1985 at around 8am.

Having arrived a month early, both were low birth weight. However, the paediatrician designated Akshay (at just 1.7Kg) a 'high-risk' baby. Not only did he take long to cry at birth, he had no suck-and-swallow

reflex, very red and delicate skin that kept peeling for weeks, barely any flesh covering his ribcage with extended gaps between the bones of his skull plates (fontanels' –both anterior and posterior). Since he couldn't be breastfed, the nurses used a nasal tube to feed Akshay while in hospital. By the time the three of us were finally allowed to leave for my parents' home, I had spent 40 days in hospital. The nurses had taught me the art of expressing breast milk into a bottle fitted with a large-holed nipple. It took an hour to make sure that Akshay swallowed the 2 ounces of milk that slowly dropped into his mouth.

No one in the family had seen a baby as tiny as Akshay Raja. He would be warmly bundled up and placed on the bed where he lay quietly for hours, his huge eyes mostly glued to the ceiling. He didn't respond to us with baby noises, or smile to himself the way his twin did. He didn't cry for milk and when we force-fed him, his regular diarrhoea got worse because the digestive tract was so delicate. In 40 days, he hadn't gained any weight and my mother, seeing me very distressed after the paediatrician hinted at 'developmental problems', tuned in to Lord Balaji for Akshay's well-being.

We also consulted a second Pediatrician at St. John's Hospital. He, after stripping off every shred of cloth covering our skin and bone infant, took his time for a thorough examination and reassured us that Akshay was a normal infant. He gave me simple tips on how to feed and care for a low-birth weight and pre-term baby and told me to rely on my parental instincts when in doubt. He was like a Godsend and we were all very grateful for his calm reassurances.

Over the next two weeks, Akshay turned the corner and in just another month, our quiet little 'Vivekananda-like' baby metamorphosed into a noisy, attention loving, wanting-to-be-constantly-carried and spoken-to kind of infant. He was yelling for his milk, sucking hard at the bottle and gaining weight. Although his developmental milestones (turning over, sitting and crawling) were rather delayed in comparison with Neha, he became very playful and finally looked as cute as she did!

Just as our family began to relax and enjoy the twins as they reached out to each other and played in



*Maj Akshay at his commissioning, IMA with family Mother: Meghna, sister: Neha, Hero: Akshay and father Wg Cdr Girish (Retd).
Pic dated 10th December 2007*

delightful-to-watch ways, Akshay, became ill with high fever and respiratory problems. He was diagnosed with Broncho-pneumonia at five and half months and we were told his immune system was weak. Fortunately, he responded well to antibiotics and by 7 and half months, he was crawling around, following his sister and trying his best to catch up with her.

Akshay had started showing us his 'I never-give-up' fighting qualities.

READ later parts of her sequel titled: 'His Story; My Way' from her at - [https:// findingnewmeaning.blog](https://findingnewmeaning.blog)



Akshay as a child playing with carton and cans

The Facebook posting prequel to the above article that made her share her heartfelt story:

Dear Fellow citizens, extended family and friends,

Our hearts overflowing with pride, sorrow and love, I, as Martyred Major Akshay Girish Kumar's mother, take the liberty of connecting my family with you all through this forum. With humility and gratitude, I thank each one of you for your presence, your messages and calls as we honour Akshay's ultimate sacrifice with that of his six co-martyrs in Nagrota.

Never in a million years could we

have been prepared to deal with the depth of loss we feel, and yet, in the last four days we have become one massive family because of Akshay. Draped in our tricolour, he has made sure that our strength and resolve to stand together to overcome our enemies is getting stronger every hour, every day. We as a nation are getting to know our truest and tallest heroes.

While congratulating the media for making Akshay so dear to all of you, with your permission, I would like to tell Akshay's factual story. In standing by us at this time, you deserve to know. I will need time to do so because I would like to start at the beginning- from his birth at 8.05 on the morn of 6th December 1985.

Short of his 31st birthday, he has become larger than life and taught us the real meaning of love, duty and sacrifice. While Girish and I have been blessed to be his parents, Akshay is proving to us that first and foremost, he is the child of our motherland. Neha his twin sister (the only one, along with me, who can claim to know him 9 months longer than anyone else!), Sangeeta his most beloved wife, his grandfather and grandmothers, his many 'bro's', and all who have known him well, were echoing the same sentiment these past few days. How has our little boy become bigger than all of us....our

brightest star, our guiding light.....?

I think he will be the story teller and I will learn a lot more about my son as I start writing.

We do not want this to be about political or intellectual debates. All we hope to do is be true to Akshay Girish. Even as I write this post, I am asking you, as well-wishers, if you feel I should go ahead.

Once again, I thank you all for sharing our pride and sorrow at Akshay's martyrdom.

A family friend, *Akshay Datar* posted this in response to the Facebook post – Hi Auntie, very shocked and saddened to hear about Akshay! It was like yesterday we all met at my wedding! I can still remember the times we used to play together as kids and hang out later when he would come down to Pune during his breaks from NDA. Extremely proud of him and I'm glad I got to know him.' *Manju Deswal* wrote: "My husband was blessed by the God Almighty to be Akshay's first Commanding Officer. Soldiers like Akshay are a rare class and hence his story needs to be written for the future generations to emulate. There

can be no one better than his rock solid mother to pen down his eventful journey. May the Almighty give strength to all near and dear ones to bear this irreparable loss?"■



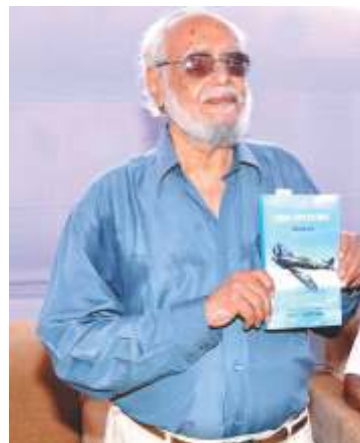
Major Akshay Girish Kumar with his wife Sangeetha, and their daughter Naina in happier times

She can be reached at Email: megirish2001@gmail.com | Follow her at - www.facebook.com/meghna.girish



The Spitfire - Memoirs

by Tannaaz Irani



The author, Wg Cdr SK Gorowala (Retd)
displaying his book



A fine book, entitled “The Spitfire – Memoirs” by Wg Cdr SK Gorowala (Retd), tells of the author's adventures in the sky which led to a slew of not always pleasant experiences on the ground. As a Flying Officer of the Royal Indian Air Force which then became the Indian Air Force, Wg Cdr Gorowala recounts his glory days – yes it was not always a halcyon time with him and his cronies having had quite a few run-ins with the flying machines as well; but he survived – and has lived to tell the tale.

“The Spitfire” was the aircraft that essentially won World War II for the Allies bringing to naught the German Blitzkrieg. Well, the author had the good fortune to learn to fly this beauty – and as his memoirs unravel, the reader sees how his life and career in the Air Force have been shaped by his experiences with The Spitfire.

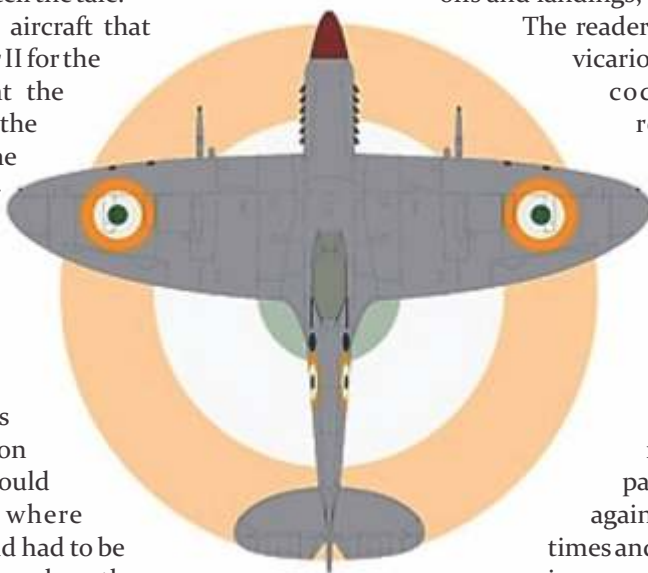
The memoirs opens with a charming description of a Formal Dinner that would be held periodically, where protocol was sacrosanct and had to be followed. Formal Dinners such as the one described are still held, the difference being, that now the toast is raised to the President of India in Hindi, not to the British Monarch in English, which takes away nothing from the charm of the ceremonious proceedings, of course.

As a cadet in training, the author was trained on aircraft such as the Tiger Moth and The Harvard and experienced thrilling take-offs and landings in them,

with hair-raising Aerobatics in the sky. Sorties are described in minute detail which may be an everyday affair to a Flying Officer, but certainly provide rare insights to civilians as to how these brave men live, risk and sometimes lose their lives, yes even in peace time, during routine exercises. The days that were spent as a cadet in training has descriptions of flight simulators as well as actual training sorties in which wind currents determine the whys and wherefores of take-offs and landings; and control of the aircraft.

The reader gets to experience, albeit vicariously, the procedures in the cock-pit, and one even remotely curious about this, can get nail biting descriptions of not just flying technicalities but also those of Officers and Cadets enjoying Aerobatics in the moonlight. Yes, there are casualties, but they are overcome, the author represents it as all being part of the ride – but then again, they get dangerous at times and prove to be a life changing experience.

At the Passing Out Parade, the author and his mates are formally decorated as Pilot Officers of the Indian Air Force which gives them an intense sense of pride and achievement. Thereafter they are put on for training to handle the Spitfire. The Spitfire is described as a technological marvel of its time and flying it has been likened to a dream come true with the author describing his feelings while piloting one



very evocatively.

Descriptions in the book are minute and detailed; and there is absolutely no way a lay person could learn anything about being a pilot, especially a fighter pilot, except through a recounting of first-hand experiences, as has been done by the intrepid Wing Commander.

The Spitfire is a joy, but she can be deadly – there were accidents and yes, some were fatal. Military funerals are described, while they are very sad, I admit, how else will a civilian know of this except by reading a book like this?

The author describes his own tryst with the Spitfire, an accident, along with an arduous and difficult recovery. He suffered a terrible setback and has described how the brain making a tremendous effort, has to re-adjust to the environment, but it can be done! Yes, he got back to work and took on the duties of Air Traffic Control Officer; as this task could keep him close to pilots, while not being an active pilot himself. Notwithstanding a horrendous accident he often went back into the air when an opportunity posed itself before him; he was not afraid to go solo in the same Spitfire that permanently altered the course of things.

The book is replete with adventures, details several air crashes, forced landings, controlled descents; pyrotechnic flares used to signal aircraft in foggy

weather; and even describes the vagaries faced by two sole survivors of a crash due to bad weather.

The book winds its way to its end with descriptions of gliding which the author took a shine to and indulged in whenever he could. He also suffered some ill health, but overcame that as well. A sweet old fashioned romance with a golden haired beauty also makes it to the book, as does an idyllic holiday in the hills of Southern India.

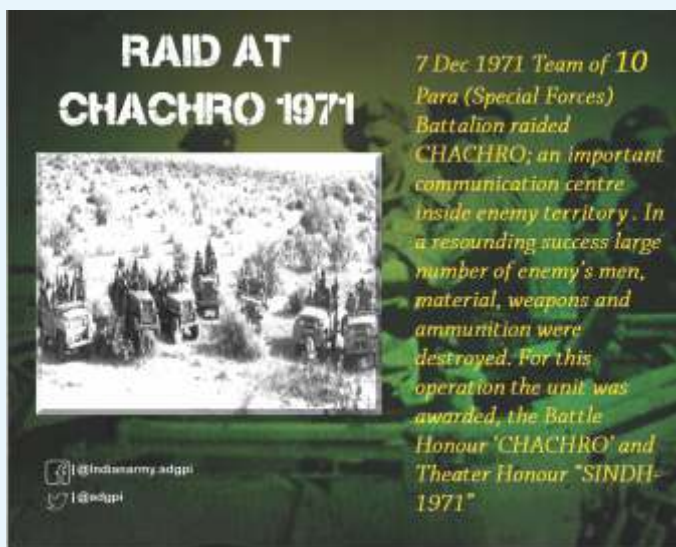
Wing Commander Gorowala has narrated his experiences in a riveting style, and has done the reading community a rare favour in penning his memoirs so engagingly, without ever having lost his joie de vivre through trying times. Even at his lowest, his spirits were always brimming; and his book shows the public the extent to which bravery and courage can allow someone to lead a very satisfying and fulfilling life.

This is not just a tale of the author. It is, but a variation of the stories of thousands of officers from all three services. Details may vary, but the bottom line is this – the courage displayed by them and their families is unimaginable.

The book is not merely a thrilling read; it is a veritable eye opener to the civilian public of the greatness of the Indian armed forces. A unique pick, the book would be hugely enjoyed by any reader. ■

87 year old Wg Cdr Gorowala is probably one of the few living entities who has seen the birth of the Indian Air Force. He has been recently felicitated by The Benares Hindu University for his book. He can be reached at Email: skgorowala@gmail.com

Remembering 10 Para (Special Forces)



On 7 Dec 1971 - Team of 10 Para (SF) raided CHACHRO an important communication centre inside enemy territory

The Army Officer and his 'Corporate' Wife



Illustration courtesy:
Maryam Hasanahmad (An Army Officer's wife)

If the girl had married a military officer ("Fauji") - as a "Fauji" wife ("Faujan") - she would either be languishing in some remote cantonment after quitting her job - or - if she had decided to keep working - she and her "Fauji" husband would be enduring a long-distance marriage. And - with a "Fauji" husband - in all probability - her "American Dream" would have remained unrealised. **CDR VIKRAM KARVE (RETD)** has penned this fictional spoof on Military Matrimony delighting "Faujis" to look back on their service days and have a good laugh – though the spoof may sound absurd - yet it hints at the truth.



A few years ago - I heard that a girl had turned down a marriage proposal from an Army Officer.

Everyone said that the boy was good.

"Yes, the boy is good - I like him - but I do not want to marry an Army Officer and get stuck throughout my life roaming around all over the country living in small cantonments. I want to pursue my career as a Software Engineer in the IT Industry - in fact - I am thinking of going abroad to the US for better career prospects and settling down there in America. Will all this be possible if I marry an Army Officer...?" she said.

Last month - I attended the girl's wedding.

The girl had done exactly what she had wanted – she got married to a NRI boy from the US – and she too has migrated and joined her husband in America – where both are pursuing their careers in the Computer Industry.

Would this have been possible had the girl had married a "Fauji" Officer...?

If the girl had married a Military Officer ("Fauji") – then – as a "Fauji" wife ("Faujan") – she would either be languishing in some remote cantonment after quitting her job – or – if she had decided to keep working in the IT or Corporate Sector– she and her

"Fauji" husband would be enduring a long-distance marriage.

And – with a "Fauji" husband – in all probability – her "American Dream" would have remained unrealised.

This real life episode reminded me of a story (a playlet) I had written around 4 years ago – in June 2013 – on Modern Military Marriage titled **THE NEW AGE FAUJI WIFE**

I am writing this story – once more – for you read and mull over – especially if you are a Military Wife – or – if you are thinking of marrying a Military Officer:

THE NEW AGE "FAUJI" COUPLE – a playlet by Vikram Karve

Cast of Characters

H – Husband: An Army Officer – a Major (Age 33)

W – Wife: The Army Officer's "Corporate" Wife (Age 30) – an MBA from a leading B-School – she is a career woman working for a top FMCG MNC in the Corporate Sector.

Scene

Major "H" and his wife "W" are at home sitting on

the dining table, having dinner

Dinner Conversation between “Fauji” Husband “H” and his “Corporate” Wife “W”

H: How was the day?

W: Hectic. Very Hectic. We are running against the clock preparing for this sudden top level meeting. And how about you? How was your day?

H: Terrible. My day was terrible. We are just wasting time preparing for the Raising Day celebrations. The “Old Man” is all hyper – he is sweating for his ACR and is driving us crazy with his micro management. He wants Officers to do the job of NCO's. Today – he made me stand all day to supervise the placing of flower pots in the Officers' Mess garden – and he personally came there ten times to shout at me. It's bloody humiliating. This peacetime soldiering gets on my nerves – it's much better to be fighting in the field.

W: Anyway – keep your Saturday evening free.

H: Saturday evening?

W: Yes. Saturday evening. We are having a big office party at the Taj. The “Head Honcho” and all the big shots are coming over from our Head Office and overseas branches. My boss has told me to bring you along – the “Head Honcho” wants to meet all the spouses. So get your best lounge suit ready.

H: Are you crazy?

W: Why? What happened?

H: Our “Raising Day” Party is on Saturday evening. It is the main function of the Raising Day celebrations and all the “Top Brass” are coming to attend. I told you that long back – didn't I...?

W: Yes – you did tell me. But now – this has suddenly come up. As far as I am concerned – this office party at the Taj is an official function – you can say that it is a “working dinner” – it is an essential part of my work – and I have to attend. And you better come too.

H: How can I come...? I have to be present at the Raising Day party. Attendance is compulsory for all Officers – it is like being on duty. And remember – as an Army Wife – you are expected to accompany me to unit functions and social occasions. The CO has ordered that all wives are to be present for the Raising Day function. As it is – the CO's wife is annoyed at your absence from the rehearsals for the entertainment programme the ladies have planned.

W: The CO has “ordered” me...? The bloody cheek...! Who the hell is your CO to order me around...? You are in the Army. Not me. Do you understand...? I am not in the Army. I am free to do as I please. You just tell your CO that. And as far as “rehearsals” are concerned – please make it clear to the CO's wife – that so-called “First Lady” of yours – that I have better things to do

than parading myself on the stage displaying my physical assets – and – I am not interested in prancing around on stage – in front of everyone – lip-syncing those vulgar Bollywood numbers.

H: Okay. Okay. Don't take part in the entertainment show. But you have to be there as a hostess.

W: Hostess...?

H: Well – all lady wives are required to stand at the entrance to welcome the guests. And then – you have to usher and look after the “senior ladies”. I think you have been especially selected to look after the wife of the GOC. The I/C said that you were the most polished and smart “lady wife” in the unit.

W: Hey – I think you are missing the point. I am not coming for your party. You are coming for my party.

H: No. No. You will have to come for the “Raising Day” Party. It is your duty as an “Army Wife”.

W: Well – when I married you – I made it clear that my career was important to me. Maybe other Army Wives like being “Eye Candy” appendages of their husbands – but I do not intend playing “second fiddle” to you. I am an independent career woman – not your “Arm Candy” Army Wife.

H: Please try to understand. The CO will spoil my ACR if you don't come. He specifically told me that you are required to be present for the Raising Day function. As it is – the CO is angry that you don't take part in AWWA and Ladies Club activities.

W: Tell me – how does it matter if he spoils your ACR...? In any case – your Army promotions are by time scale and seniority – you just have to pass time and wait patiently in the queue for your turn – and when your time comes – you will be promoted in due course. For me – in the corporate world – I have to slog hard against cut-throat competition and deliver results to earn every promotion. That is why I am a ‘Senior Manager’ today at such a young age – because of my sheer performance and merit. And – that is the reason why I earn more than double the salary than what you get in the Army. And – I have much better career prospects than you. My boss says that they consider me a “high-flyer”.

H: I know all that. There is no need to boast. If you do not want to come for the “Raising Day” Party – you don't come. I will make up some excuse and say that you are not feeling well or something.

W: I am not coming for your “Raising Day” Party – that is for sure. But – you just tell me one thing – suppose you don't attend your “Raising Day” Party – what will happen to you...?

H: Are you crazy...? They will take action against me. They are sure to give me an adverse ACR.

W: *They can spoil your ACR – but they can't throw you out of the Army – can they...? Tell me – can they throw you out of the Army – just for not attending a party...?*

H: *No. I don't think they can throw me out of the Army for not attending a party.*

W: *In my case – they can throw me out – yes – my boss will fire me from my job if I am missing when the “Head Honcho” wants to meet me. And – if I make a good impression – then – the sky is the limit. There is a position open in Singapore – and I have been short-listed. There are three others – but I stand a good chance. That is why my boss also wants you to come for the party – so that the “Head Honcho” can “size you up”.*

H: *“Size Me Up”...? Why does your “Head Honcho” want to “size me up”...?*

W: *I told my boss about you – that you were a highly qualified and talented Engineer – an M. Tech. from an IIT – and that you were frustrated in the army doing mundane jobs.*

H: *Frustrated...? Who told you that I was frustrated in the army...?*

W: *Didn't you tell me how humiliated you felt when you were told to stand all day and supervise the placing of flower pots in the officers' mess garden...? And – don't they make you run the canteen...? And – aren't you fed up doing all sorts of odd jobs in the unit...? Are these “run-of-the-mill” jobs worthy of an M. Tech. from an IIT...? A brilliant guy like you is just wasting his time and withering away his life in the army – and your talent is unappreciated and unrewarded.*

H: *But what can I do...?*

W: *You come with me for my office party on Saturday and meet the “Head Honcho”. Maybe he has something in mind for you. They may even make you a good job offer.*

EPILOGUE

THIS STORY CAN HAVE THREE POSSIBLE ENDINGS

Let me give you three apocryphal endings to this story.

ENDING 1

Like a dutiful “Fauji Wife” – **W** skipped her office party – and **W** accompanied her Army Husband **H** to the “Raising Day” Party.

Her gesture was much appreciated by her husband **H**.

With her poise, elegance and polish – **W** succeeded in impressing the “Top Brass” and their wives – and the CO was delighted with **H**.

In **W**'s office – her boss was furious with **W** for being absent from the office party – which – for her boss – was a most important corporate event.

The “Head Honcho” expressed his disappointment at not meeting **W**.

Though **W**'s boss did not fire her from her job – **W** was side-lined for the lucrative and coveted Singapore assignment – and soon – **W** was passed over for promotion and her junior was promoted over her head and became her new boss.

Frustrated at being marginalized – **W** quit her job in the MNC and took up a new job in another corporate firm – but now – as far as her corporate career was concerned – **W** decided to play “second-fiddle” to her husband's Army career – and she put in all her best efforts as a typical ambitious “Fauji Wife” to boost her husband's army career.

When her husband **H** was posted out of the city to a new station in a small town – **W** quit her job – and she gave up her corporate career to become a full-time “homemaker”.

W now accompanies her husband wherever he is posted.

As an ideal “Fauji Wife” – **W** is playing a great role in bolstering and promoting her husband's army career by her stellar participation in AWWA, Ladies Clubs and other social activities.

H and **W** live happily ever after.

ENDING 2

H did not attend the “Raising Day” Party of his unit.

H accompanied his wife **W** to her corporate event at the Taj.

The CO was livid at **H** – for his “un-officer-like” conduct of being wilfully absent from the “Raising Day” Party (an official social function).

H was admonished by his CO – who vowed to finish him off and ruin his career.

(The CO made good his threat – when he gave **H** an adverse ACR)

“Corporate Wife” **W** took her “Fauji Husband” **H** for her grand office party at the Taj.

At the corporate office party – **W** introduced her husband **H** to the Corporate “Head Honcho”.

Everyone was impressed by **H**.

There was a sudden announcement – **W** was promoted and she given the coveted Singapore assignment.

And then – there was even more surprise – the “Head Honcho” offered **H** a very lucrative position – also in Singapore – so that **W** and **H** could live together.

W would be head of marketing – and **H** would be

head of technology.

H quit the army (helped by the adverse ACR his CO had given him).

H took up the corporate job offer – and joined his wife W in Singapore.

W and H live happily ever after.

ENDING 3 (Suggested by a reader - a fellow “Fauji” Officer)

W goes for her office party – and H goes for his “Raising Day” Party.

W's civilian corporate boss understands the circumstances due to which W's husband H could not attend the crucial office party.

But – H's “Fauji” CO gets furious because H's wife W did not attend the unit's “Raising Day” party.

H's CO duly spoils H's ACR (Annual Confidential Report) – and – to teach H a lesson – H's CO gets H posted out to an insignificant appointment in a hardship non-family station in the field.

H's wife W moves to a house in a civilian area in the city – and with her “Fauji” husband H away – W

struggles all alone to manage her home, the kids' schools and her corporate career in the office.

After some time – H gets frustrated at having to live all alone in a non-family station without his wife and children.

H also knows that his career prospects in the Army are now quite bleak – due to the adverse ACR given by the CO of his erstwhile unit.

So – H wants to quit the army – but his request is turned down since he has not yet been superseded for promotion – and H is told to wait for a few years till he is “finally superseded” for promotion.

So both H and W live miserably ever after.

Dear Reader: Tell us – What do you think happened...?

Ending 1 or **Ending 2** or **Ending 3** – which one do you think is more likely...?

Most of my “Fauji” friends think that **Ending 3** is most likely.

Which ending do you think is most likely...?

Or – do you think the story can have another more interesting ending...? ■

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A creative person with a zest for life, Vikram Karve is a retired Naval Officer turned full time writer. Educated at IIT Delhi, IITBHU Varanasi, The Lawrence School Lovedale, Bishops School Pune and the Naval Academy Cochin (Kochi) – Vikram has published two books: 'Cocktail' a collection of fiction short stories about relationships (2011) and 'Appetite for a Stroll' a book of Foodie Adventures (2008) and he is currently working on his novel. An avid blogger, he has written a number of fiction short stories and creative non-fiction articles in magazines and journals for many years before the advent of blogging.

Vikram has taught at a University as a Professor for almost 15 years and now occasionally lectures as a visiting faculty and devotes most of his time to creative writing. Vikram lives in Pune India with his family. He can be reached at Email: vikramkarve@hotmail.com and you can read his writings on his blog at url: <http://karvediat.blogspot.in>

Jayalalitha at an Army Function



A young Jayalalitha (Late Chief Minister of Tamilnadu) singing at 14 Engrs Mess, Circa 1971.

The Love Story of a Soldier

by Lt Gen HS Panag (Retd)



Spring was in full bloom in the Valley of Kashmir and sitting in the 100-year-old Chinar Hut, as the Northern Army Commander, I looked back upon the first five months of my tenure with mixed feelings. Two hundred terrorists had been eliminated; summer posture for counter infiltration was in place; the snow-damaged fence was being repaired at a feverish pitch; but human rights violations were continuing to be a matter of concern.

Insurgency had been on the wane since 2004 and with a concerted effort by commanders at all levels, there had been no human rights violations from either deliberate or 'rogue' operations. However, due to tension, over-enthusiasm and at times panic, there had been inadvertent violations leading to resentment amongst the people. There were allegations galore. A 2005-2006 case of 'fake encounters' in the Ganderbal area being pinned on the Indian Army turned out to be the handiwork of a rogue police officer, for instance.

As the Army Commander, I had addressed the maximum number of troops at a number of places and sent out a personal message, which was conveyed to the 370,000 personnel of Northern Command emphasizing the upholding of human rights. In those days, there was an unwritten code of conduct followed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Killing of terrorists, whether Pakistan nationals or locals, by the security forces evoked no protests. There were protests only when there were human rights violations.

Suddenly the mid-day calm was shattered by the breaking news on TV. Massive protests had broken out in the small town of Kangan on the Srinagar-Sonamarg Road. It was alleged that a soldier had raped a young girl and killed a man. There were also confusing reports about the soldier being killed and his body being dragged in the main street. I got

through to the Commanding Officer (CO) of the Rashtriya Rifles (RR) Battalion in 30 seconds and was informed that the incident had taken place about an hour ago. The body of the soldier had been retrieved and the matter was under investigation. The protests in Kangan continued and started a chain reaction leading to more protests in neighbouring small towns and villages. BBC and CNN were also giving extensive coverage ridiculing the Indian Army and the local government.

Noting the gravity of the incident, we decided that this incident would be investigated in 24 hours to assuage public sentiments and punish the guilty. J&K Police, the Intelligence Bureau and the RR Battalion cooperated to get to the bottom of the incident. In addition to this, the profile of the soldier was pieced together to draw appropriate lessons. What came out was a tragic story of human emotions.

Sowar Ranjit Singh was from a small village in Punjab and had joined 63 Cavalry (CAV) – an armoured regiment – after his training. 'Sowar' (the one who rides) was a term used for a Sepoy in cavalry units and continues to be used by the armoured regiments even today. It was also once used as the moniker by the Swiss West End Watch Co for a line of watches. Ranjit was a handsome Sikh, who joined the army at the age of 17, in 2000, after finishing school. He was an all-round sportsman, excelling in basketball. A gunner by trade, he was appointed the gunner on a tank with only two years' service, which was an exception. His mother was pressing him to get married, but he insisted that he would get married after his J&K tenure. RR units were raised to specifically to fight insurgency in J&K in the early 1990s.

Today, we have 62 RR Battalions under 15 Sector Headquarters and five Force Headquarters. The composition of the RR is based on 50 per cent troops

from an Infantry Regiment and 50 per cent drawn from all arms. The RR forms the mainstay of our Counter Insurgency Grid and is a success story of the Indian Army. Ranjit was very excited about his RR tenure, but was also apprehensive about the infantry predominant operations in J&K for which he had done only the basic training that is applicable to non-Infantry arms.

With these thoughts, he arrived at the Corps Battle School (CBS), which conducts the most comprehensive and realistic training for counter insurgency and counter-terrorism in the world. As the Director General of Military Training, I had also made a contribution for refining the three CBSs. As the Army Commander, I visited the CBSs at least twice a month. At any time 3,000 – 4,000 soldiers were under training at one CBS. Every soldier/officer inducted into J&K has to undergo four weeks of training at the CBS. Training is done under realistic conditions to simulate situations troops would encounter in operations.

Ranjit did very well in the training at the CBS and was adjudged the best student of his batch. That is when I met this young soldier. I presented to him the Best Student award and remembered him, due to his excellent bearing and fitness, and also because he was from 63 CAV, which had served under my command when I commanded 43 Armoured Brigade at Patiala.

The young soldier joined his unit after the tough training, hoping for some respite. But he soon found that the life at Company Operating Base (COB) was even more gruelling. Indian Army follows the grid pattern of deployment and response in the hinterland of J&K. Each RR Battalion deploys 5-6 COBs. A COB, depending upon its composition, can have 60 – 80 troops. Out of these, one third are engaged in administration and security, one third are out for patrolling or operations and one third are resting and training. During a big operation or in an emergency, all hands are on deck, for as long as 24-72 hours. On an average, a soldier gets only 5-6 hours of sleep in a 24-hour cycle, and that too wouldn't be in one stretch but in two or three intervals.

Human intelligence is the mainstay in counter-insurgency. Each COB has an intelligence cell that develops sources in the local population. Ranjit acquitted himself well in operations and in next six months, he was a member of small teams that took part in a number of operations that killed seven terrorists. He was enjoying his work and liked the challenging life. After one year, he was selected to be part of the Intelligence Cell.

Personnel of the Intelligence Cell went to the villages with Medical Teams and also as part of the Sadbhavna Projects. Ranjit developed a number of

sources based on whose information successful operations were launched. On a visit to one of his sources, he met the source's cousin who was a college-going girl. It was love at first sight, straight out of folklore. A handsome young Sikh soldier and a beautiful Kashmiri girl met shyly at first, but then daringly found ways to meet despite the societal restrictions and Indian Army rules and regulations. Soon, they were madly in love, oblivious of their religion, cultural background and the raging proxy war. Ranjit knew he was violating orders, but who can resist the call of the heart?

Since meetings were infrequent and that too virtually in public, the two spoke for long hours on mobile phone and in so doing, Ranjit had to forgo his rest time, which he did not begrudge.

When he went on leave, he bought a ring and quietly handed over the same to her at a Medical Camp. His tenure of two years was getting over. He volunteered and got an extension of six months. At the end of it, he went to meet his soul mate to reassure her that he would be coming back on leave from his place of posting to take her away to get married.

Ranjit coordinated with her to meet in Kangan town. Since, he was to move on posting the next day, he had not been assigned any duties and hence could not go out of the COB. He saw an area domination patrol moving out of the COB and joined its tail without either informing his immediate superior or the patrol leader. As the patrol reached near Kangan town, he quietly peeled off. He was armed as all soldiers are in J&K, all the time. As he moved towards the rendezvous, an abandoned house on the outskirts of Kangan, he was aware of the risk that he was taking. But in matters of love, caution is thrown to the winds. The meeting was brief, but both were in bliss. He promised he would be back in a few days to take her back with him. Needless to mention that in the given circumstances, the relationship was platonic and there had been no intimacy beyond holding hands.

After the meeting, as he came out of the house, he was surrounded by an angry crowd, which accused him of molesting/raping the girl. He tried to reason with them and tried to tell them the truth. The girl also arrived on the scene and screamed his innocence. But when tempers are high, who listens to anyone?

Pushing and shoving began. Ranjit cautioned them that he was armed. On hearing this, one enraged man, wielding an axe, came towards Ranjit. Having no choice left, he fired and killed the man. The crowd parted and Ranjit walked away. He had barely gone 50 yards when from the opposite side, an even bigger crowd came towards him. Soon he was in the centre of

the street, surrounded by a crowd of 150 people. He fired in the air to warn the crowd, but it had only a temporary effect.

The crowd started stoning him. He tried to use his mobile to contact the base, but it got knocked out of his hand. He was in a dilemma. He could resort to firing and throwing grenades to make a getaway, but it would result in four to five people being killed. He was probably already feeling guilty of having had to kill one man in self-defence and would have known that he was likely to be court martialled for this violation of law. He looked beyond the crowd, searching for his friend. He saw her weeping helplessly and held back by the crowd. Not wanting to cause more loss of life and overcome with perceived guilt, he put his

forehead on the muzzle of his AK 47 and pressed the trigger.

The police retrieved his mobile and through it got to his friend. The brave girl stood by Ranjit and gave full details of the incident. The village elders were called and the girl narrated the tragic story. The protests ended. The family of the man killed by Ranjit was suitably compensated by the government. The girl was adopted by the Indian Army and her education was sponsored.

And Ranjit Singh? How would we handle the death of this young soldier in unusual and tragic circumstances? After a lot deliberation, we decided that since he committed suicide to save innocent lives, he would be declared 'killed in action'.■



Lt Gen Harcharanjit Singh Panag, PVSM, AVSM & VSM last served as GOC-in-C, Northern Command and GOC-in-C, Central Command. In December 2008, after his retirement from the military, he was appointed as an Administrative Member of the Armed Forces Tribunal. He is an alumnus of the prestigious National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Higher Command Course, Mhow and the National Defence College, New Delhi. This article first appeared at newslaundry.com, reproduced with permission of author and courtesy website. He has authored several publications concerning Indian defence forces and national security. He can be reached at Email: hspanag@gmail.com

OBITUARY



Wg Cdr T Sitarama Swami (Retd)
(01 July 1930 – 19 July 2016)

Wg Cdr T Sitarama Swami, a fond subscriber of 'Fauji India' peacefully passed away on 19th July 2016.

He was born into a family of freedom fighters; his paternal grandparents went to jail during the freedom movement and his grandfather was the Pradesh Congress President of Vizagpatnam district. He was a Gold Medalist from Andhra University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in

Engineering from Kakinada Engineering College in Andhra Pradesh.

He joined the Indian Air Force, on the 14th of March, 1955, as a commissioned Officer in the Education branch and retired on the 31st of July 1979.

In his personal life he believed in "simple living and high thinking."

He is survived by his wife Mrs Syamala Sitarama Swami and two adult children.

Readers can send similar Obituary to 'Fauji India' for publishing at Email: faujimagazine@gmail.com

Reflections on the Year Gone By



by Lt Col Noel Ellis (Retd)



As I reflect on my year gone by, I remember making no new year's resolutions. The reason was simple, so that I don't break any. But I promised to myself, that I will pursue my hobbies of writing and gardening. At the end of the year as I reflect on them, you all will be surprised that I wrote about 70 articles and could not complete 25 – they are half written and shall stay in my memoirs. By the way there are still 15 days for the year to end; I may land up writing a few more. On the gardening front my efforts, have started paying me.

All those who are connected to me on Facebook would know, and I feel satisfied and content. A few days back I remember promising to myself to start enjoying the sunrise and sunsets, the breeze, the moon, the sea – basically nature – and I feel that nothing else gives me more solace and peace. My thoughts are calm, my day starts with cheerfulness as my blooming flowers give me so much of tranquillity and peace of mind that words can't express.

I remember last year, thanks to the social media and the mobile networks, I was flooded with New Year messages and blessings. I think the blessings have helped me and my family tremendously. As time went by came Holi, and the wishes of the festival of colours were galore. The colourful messages really cheered me up; the choice of words in all messages was amazing as if they all were meant for me personally.

Time went by came Dussera and Diwali, and again the victory of good over evil messages helped me to kill the evil in me, the festival of lights lifted my spirits and of course there was Eid and Gur Purabs where the blessings of Allah and Waheguru touched my soul, and now comes Christmas again, the festival of peace, happiness and joy which will be followed by another new year. New resolutions, new reflections, new

associations and everything new is about to start again. So let me now reflect on a few things gone by and yet to come. Maybe we all can draw our conclusions thereafter. So let me wish you folks a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful new year in advance. God bless every friend of mine abundantly.

We have had the worst year as far as the Indo-Pak relations were concerned. With China too I would say has been a year of ups and downs. We had our share of martyrs' and we too did the surgical strikes. Earthquakes, typhoons, plane crashes continued in various parts of the world. Our Parliament went to a new low where all we saw was no business happening per se. Statistics can claim that X number of bills were passed but were passed with hardly any deliberations. A personal attack on each other, use of un-parliamentary language has become the name of the game. Demonetisation or remonetisation is a new thing which came to light after years.

The valley saw its lowest ebb. Now with Mehbooba Mufti giving 4 Lakhs to Burhan Wani's kin was like adding salt to our wounds. Well, the dance of democracy continues and is slowly transformed into "Democracy", but this country moves on. Mamta has been in a fight with one and all, Kejriwal doesn't know whom to fight with or what to fight for, Rahul baba is trying to become a leader, but fails to impress me by miles, Mayawati and her written speeches shows how well read she is, Jaitley ki kately is brewing lassi of a different kind instead of tea, Amma has left no one to take over her legacy. Even then we are firing rocket after rocket and sending satellites one after the other. Corruption continues, political mis-governance continues, gareeb remains gareeb, real estate bubble doesn't burst, banking woes continue. *Aata Bhi Mehnga, Cheeni Bhi Mehngi, Mehnga Har Saaman, Fir*

Bhi Mera Bharat Mahan.

OROP, has any one heard about it? I am sure we all must have, but PM Sahib, when will your good governance reflect on it? We have deposited our life certificates already. I dread if you push the dates to the next financial year for its implementation. We the ex-servicemen are still as disciplined as we were when we were in uniform in fact more disciplined now. We haven't behaved like the Gujjars or the Jat agitation, though our forces have numerous people from that community. Hanumanthappa's are still getting buried in avalanches while defending this country. It is a matter of shame for me to see an ex Air force chief under CBI custody – well I feel a little taken aback. If he is involved, let him get a boot, but one has to set the system right once for all. But if he isn't, how will his image be restored. I am also awaiting the 7th pay commission. Now that the sarkar has collected so much mullah in the banks, will it part with the booty? Hoping against hope to see that implemented too. I really want to see the ache din and soon. Dear Mr PM, are you listening?

This year has seen TATA in turmoil, a rarity of kinds. Such things can also happen, in fact in this country anything can happen. Rahul Baba can trigger an earth quake in parliament if he is allowed to speak. Kejriwal can cure cough by coughing out scam after scam of all governments. I can put any allegation on you and get away scot free is the game of the day. The only positive note I find in all this mess is that I believe Arnab has left his job. What a relief it must be to the viewers! His fans must be now waiting for his channel to be launched. Hope he doesn't. Mr PM, why can't there be a cap on news channels, like you have put a cap on withdrawal on cash from a bank. Why can't there be a limit of words, and the correct decibel level laid down for these channels? Moment you exceed any of them, CBI should take over the channel and Supreme Court should suo-motto charge the news anchor for "breaking the news." Anyways, I don't watch them anymore, and I don't feel like reading the newspaper also anymore, so no news is good news. Good riddance to bad rubbish I suppose.

I am also looking forward to something new on the

social media. Except for posts of a very few people, I don't even care to open the attachments. My good morning list from people who never wished me earlier has gotten so long, that the morning doesn't look as good any more. Whatsapp has become such a nuisance that within minutes, one finds 345 messages unread. Imagine...345 notification bells are difficult to bear, yes I can understand I can silence my phone, or that particular group notifications. But then why do I keep a cell phone that too a smart one. Facebook is also losing its relevance, except I get reminded of birthdays of my good friends.

I made a blog noeellisblog.com but except for the first 8 comments which some genuine friends happened to see, I find only spammers on it trying to sell me porn or Viagra, or are willing to write stories for me. Well, that's life. Twitter I don't enjoy handling, so won't comment. Mail has died its own death I suppose. Above all I find all those people who post internet links on mail or Whatsapp get no attention at all. I somehow do not like people who are just forwarders. Anyways, I have to bear with them in the coming years.

As a passing thought friends, let us unite to bring in positivity in our lives and all those who we come in contact with. The more we get

embroiled in our mundane lives, the more we miss out on the little goodies that nature and God has showered upon us. Let us look after the environment, let us plant a tree and admire a flower, real flower not a flower on Whatsapp.

Let us make someone whom we don't know happy, let us just be good citizens, and in the bargain *Swachh Bharat* etc. will fall into place. I don't know I may be sounding like a preacher all right, but I don't preach through forwards. I tell you what I have decided to do, and I am going to spend time with my family and friends. I shall enjoy every moment of life. I shall try and become app savvy – well I now have to learn to pay through the Paytm and other e-wallets to book an OLA cab, pay them through my mobile and carry on writing and improving my garden. Any suggestions friends, you are welcome to send them to me, but will you take my words positively, I wonder! ■

“As a passing thought friends, let us unite to bring in positivity in our lives and all those who we come in contact with. The more we get embroiled in our mundane lives, the more we miss out on the little goodies that nature and God has showered upon us.”

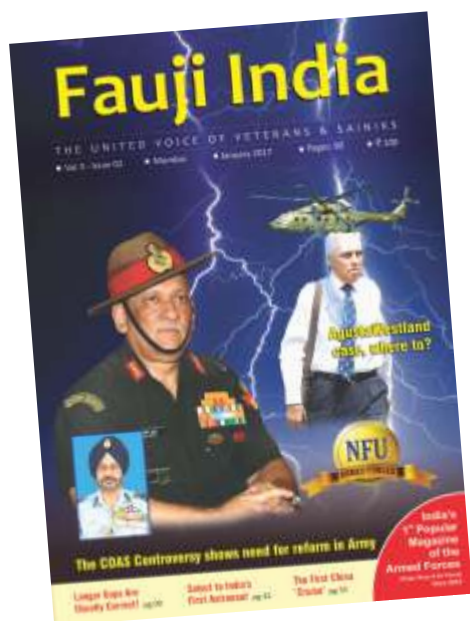


Lt Col Noel Ellis (Retd) is an ex-Mech Inf Officer and served the Indian Army for 23 years before taking his PMR. He is an alumnus of Sainik School Kapurthala, Punjab, NDA Khadakwasla, IMA Dehradun, DSSC Wellington, and IIM Ahmedabad. He has held various staff appointments and instructional during his career. He pursues writing as one of his hobby. Presently he is the Chief of Security with one of India's steel giants. He can be reached at E-mail ellis.noel@gmail.com

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Sarhad Par Sena Baithi Hai

(Ek Sainik Ka Apne Desh Vasiyon Ko Aashwasan)

by Lt Gen Mukesh Sabharwal, Veteran



Main kal bhi tha, main aaj bhi hun
(I was there yesterday too, I am there today too)
 Phir gham mein doobe shehri kyun,
(Then why are countrymen in sorrow)
 Bechain na ho, mayus na ban
(Do not be sad, do not be in vain)
 Sarhad par sena baithi hai
(Army is positioned on the borders)
 Masoom ki jaane le lekar
(Having taken lives of innocents)
 Aatanki seena tane hain,
(Terrorists are bracing their chest)
 Laachar hain vo, dushvar hain vo
(Helpless are they, in difficult times they are)
 Sadbuddhi kahin gava baithe
(They have lost their sanity)
 Jis par goli barsaate hain
(On whom we shower bullets)
 Vo bhi Allah ki naymat hain,
(They are also creation of God)
 Farq sirf bas itna hai
(The only difference is that)
 Vo janme ghar pados mein hain
(They took birth in a neighbouring country)

Jab jab dushman lalkara hai
(Whenever the enemy dared us)
 Tab tab usko pachhada hai,
(Everytime we defeated them)
 Gar aankh utha kar vo dekhe
(If and when they raise their eyes)
 Usey nayan mukt kar denge
(We will make them eye-less)
 Yen sena Hindustan ki hai
(This is Indian Army)
 Chahat keval balidaan ki hai,
(The desire is only for valour and sacrifice)
 Tum so sako such chayen ke sang
(So that countrymen can sleep in peace)
 Zimma sambhale sainik hum
(Thus soldiers take this onus on us)
 Raat tanik lambi toh kya
(If the night be longer, let it be)
 Subah abhi aati hogi,
(Soon morning will dawn)
 Baichain na ho, mayus na ban
(Do not be sad, do not be in vain)
 Sarhad par sena baithi hai
(Army is positioned on the borders)

English translation by Team Fauji India. Lt Gen Mukesh Sabharwal is former Adjutant General, Indian Army. He runs a blog - <http://mukeshsabharwal.wordpress.com/> He can be reached at Email: mukeshsabharwal12@gmail.com



Once an Army Major was caught by Pakistanis, he escapes from there and calls up his CO

Major: Sir, I was caught by the Pakistanis.

CO: So, where are you now?

Major: Sir, with lot of risk, I have managed to escape.

CO: That's fine, but when will you report to the unit?

Major: Sir, they have taken out one my eyes, a kidney and amputated one leg too.

CO: Look Buddy, we have GOC's inspection tomorrow, see if you can make it on time. **- Lt Col RK Sharma (Retd)**

Spiritual Side to Me

Wife: I'm heading to the store, do you want anything?

Hubby: I want a sense of meaning and purpose in my life. I desire to seek fulfilment and completeness to my soul. I want to connect to God and discover the spiritual side to me.

Wife: Be specific, "Blender's Pride or Royal Stag..?"

- Mrs Jyoti Tyagi

I want a Mercedes

CO: 2IC, I want a Mercedes?

2IC: Sir AHQ won't sanction moreover sir we don't have enough funds for that.

CO: QM, I want Mercedes

QM: Sorry Sir that's not an authorised item, but still I will take up a case with HQs and get it authorised. After that we can place demand, but not sure whether we can get it before 14 months

Finally....

CO: SM Sahab, I want a Mercedes!

SM: Sir, which colour?

- Wg Cdr John D (Retd)

Faujitoon

By Kureel



Press Hard



Karmic Battlefield

by Rajiv Sharma, Astrologer

CAPRICORN - Dec 23 to Jan 20

Will make some brisk arrangements to eject a guest from your household, after some continuing mentality of his/her to demotivate a young member of your family. A scent of success being felt by some associates of yours in business or employment, in some overwhelming effort of yours to fully utilize your talents, will be special in this festive season. Your natural sign lord Saturn, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of relationship comfort.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21 to Feb 19

Will take to task a client of yours by exposing his/her ways of deliberately influencing your workforce in business against you, for some reasons best known to him/her. Some premature induction of a cousin of yours in your family business by your elders will be purely at the instance of your uncle or aunt, which consciously cannot be opposed. Your natural sign lord Saturn, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of your talent up gradation.

PISCES - Feb 20 to Mar 20

Will find it an uphill task to change the fortunes of a new found good friend, due to some repeated interference of a close family member of yours. The complexities of your age old family customs could make you come into the anxiety mode for some days; so the only way out is to meditate or follow a strict fitness regime for mind diversion. Your natural sign lord Jupiter, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of overnight successes in speculative ventures.

ARIES - Mar 21 to Apr 20

Will create opportunities for yourself from absolutely nowhere in the midst of some chaos in your work market, raising the bar of respect in your community almost overnight. The maiden venture of a child of yours in a new career interest could be more demanding than expected for your child, making you rightly motivate him/her ASAP! Your natural sign lord Mars, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of association with new influential family friends.

TAURUS - Apr 21 to May 20

Will not mind following some strict guidelines set by a grandparent of yours for negotiating a family occasion, with the sole aim of coming in the good books of your elders. Some post mortem sort of effort of yours after a breakup of yours in a love angle will surprisingly translate into a mending act for this relationship. Your natural sign lord Venus, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of implementation happening of some long kept business expansion plans.

GEMINI - May 21 to June 21

Will casually subject a prodigy of yours to the litmus test for an ambitious business task, even when his/her performances as your apprentice has been more than satisfying. The luck factor involved, in some efforts of yours to regain some property rights, will play a big part; though the end result could tilt in your favor! Your natural sign lord Mercury, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of finding charm in a new friendship of yours.

CANCER - June 22 to July 23

Will smartly sort of rotate the strike with your working partner in some negotiations process for your business, to counter the mind games played by the client. Some unfortunate tampering of some important documents of yours, by none other than a close family member, could be hard to react upon. Your natural sign lord Moon, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of finding ways and means to reform some controversial process of your community.

LEO - July 24 to Aug 23

Will pull out of some moral policing exercise in your neighborhood, as things could turn ugly in your otherwise good relations with some immediate neighbors. A sort of cult figure of your work interests could surface in your life, with some contacts of your life partner or love interest; making you satisfy your urge for knowhow. Your natural sign lord Sun, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of gaining attention from unapproachable individuals of your life.

VIRGO - Aug 24 to Sept 23

Will tempt a client in business by waiving off some charges of yours much to his/her convenience; and as a result portraying your company of being a soft target for the competitors. Some mockery made of the performances of a favored junior of yours in employment, by none other than your boss, could be hard to react upon. Your natural sign lord Mercury, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of improvement in the health condition of a family member.

LIBRA - Sept 24 to Oct 22

Will withstand the barrage of interference in your personal affairs by every Tom Dick and Harry from your inlaws side, making your life partner unexpectedly sympathize with you. Some long term professional gains sought from a new friend could go against the ethics of friendship, which should be consciously realized. Your natural sign lord Venus, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of soul satisfaction gained from a charitable cause.

SCORPIO - Oct 23 to Nov 22

Will go down in the history of histrionics in your employment by taking full credit for some super success in an assignment by your department, making your boss sideline you from important chores. Your huge following amongst the young guns of your relations could be the result of some hard work put in by you to resolve issues of some relatives off late. Your natural sign lord Mars, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of motivation arising for an academic exercise.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23 to Dec 22

Will play mental war games, in other words mind games, against some misdeeds by some close relatives of yours; making a huge impact and impressing your whole family. Some hangover of excessive partying in this festive weekend could translate into some brawl with a neighbor, which should be checked before you tarnish your image. Your natural sign lord Jupiter, takes charge of your fortunes and rings in the new year for you with a right dose of finding a lease of life for a sick unit of your business.

(Rajiv Sharma is a practicing astrologer based in Mumbai. He can be contacted on his mobile no. 09167137766. You can also reach him at email: iatprathamesh@yahoo.com).

China Tests Latest Stealth Jet; Pak Interested



China has tested an improvised version of its stealth fighter and plans to sell it at half the price of the US variant to break Western monopoly over the high-tech aircraft, which will have strategic implications for India as Pakistan has already shown interest in acquiring it.

An improved version of China's fifth-generation FC-31 Gyrfalcon stealth fighter jet has conducted its maiden flight last week in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning province, state-run China Daily reported today. Previously known as the J-31, the twin engine, radar evading aircraft is still under development by Shenyang Aircraft Corp, part of the Aviation Industry Corp of China, (AVIC), it said.

The Chinese stealth aircraft have strategic significance for India as besides China, Pakistan - which is producing JF-17 Thunder fighter along with Beijing - has already evinced interest in acquiring China's stealth fighter. India is yet to have stealth aircraft in its arsenal. AVIC displayed a large-scale model of the FC-31 at the 14th Dubai Air show in the UAE in November, 2015. Specifications supplied by AVIC show the jet has a maximum takeoff weight of 28 metric tonnes, a flight radius of 1,250 kms and a top speed of Mach 1.8, or 1.8 times the speed of sound. It can carry eight tonnes of weapons. The plane can hold six missiles in its internal weapons bay and another six under its wings, AVIC said.

The first test flight of the FC-31's second prototype took place on Friday at Shenyang Aircraft Corp, four years after the first prototype took to the skies, the Daily quoted officials as saying. The report also said fifth-generation fighters are the most advanced available.

Fu Qianshao, an aircraft expert with the PLA Air Force, said the new FC-31 has state-of-the-art instruments such as its electro-optical targeting system and helmet-mounted display and sight system. The new FC-31 seems to have better stealth capabilities, improved electronic equipment and a larger payload capacity, said Wu Peixin, an aviation industry observer in Beijing said. "Compared with the first FC-31, there are a lot of improvements on the second prototype. Changes were made to the airframe, wings and vertical tails, which make it leaner, lighter and more manoeuvrable," he said.

AVIC wants to use the FC-31 to capture market share at home and abroad but the company is making a big push to attract foreign buyers with its medium-sized stealth combat planes, he said. Li Yuhai, deputy general manager of AVIC, previously said AVIC plans to use the FC-31 to "put an end to some nations' monopolies on the fifth-generation fighter jet" and this plane "is able to compete with any other aircraft of its kind".

"I believe the aircraft will have bright prospects in the market. Based on my experience and knowledge, I presume its price will be around USD 70 million, about half that of the US' Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II," Fu said. "Moreover, the

fourth-generation Euro fighter Typhoon and Dassault Rafale fighter jets are priced at about USD 100 million. All of these mean you can spend a lot less money to get an advanced, fifth-generation stealth combat plane," Fu told the Daily.

The only fifth-generation fighter jet currently available in the market is the US' F-35 Lightning II, but the US sells it only to allies. Following the Friday test flight, aviation enthusiasts posted pictures on Chinese websites, showing what they said was the second prototype in flight. The FC-31 was unveiled in October, 2012, when the first prototype made its maiden flight, becoming the country's second fifth-generation fighter jet following the J-20, which conducted its first flight in January, 2011. Deliveries of the J-20 to the People's Liberation Army Air Force have started.

Source: PTI

Pakistan Ex-Army Chief to Command 39-Nation Anti-terror Force



Pakistan's former army chief, General Raheel Sharif has agreed to command a multinational Islamic anti-terror force, on certain terms and conditions, including being allowed to arbitrate between belligerents, a media report said.

Daily Pakistan, citing sources, reported that Sharif, who relinquished office of the army chief command last week, was willing to command the 39-nation Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAF) set up under Saudi Arabia's auspices in December last year.

The report said that Iran has also assured to accept Pakistan's role in mediating Yemen crisis if Sharif becomes IMAFT chief with an authority of arbitrator, and would use its influence on the Houthi rebels to bring them to the negotiating table.

It quoted the sources as saying that Sharif had expressed his willingness for the arbitration during his meeting with Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz.

The creation of IMAFT, with a joint command center in Riyadh, was announced by Saudi Arabian Defence Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud on December 15, 2015.

Initially with 34 members, the military alliance of Muslim countries spanning Nigeria to Malaysia intended to undertake military intervention against IS and other anti-terrorist activities across the Middle East and other countries, had risen to 39 by March 2016.

Source: IANS

India successfully test-fires nuclear capable Agni-V



India tested its Agni-V intercontinental ballistic missile-(ICBM) in its final operational configuration from Wheeler Island off Odisha on Monday, paving the way for its eventual induction into the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) after user-trials.

The nuclear-capable Agni-V, which can even reach the northernmost parts of China with its strike range of over 5,000-km, was test-fired from its canister on a launcher truck just after 11 am. "All the test parameters of the missile, which was tested for its full range, were successfully achieved. The missile splashed down near Australian waters," said an official.

this fourth and final experimental test of the three-stage Agni-V -- if it is fully successful-- comes after a gap of two years due to minor technical tweaking required in the ballistic missile as well as the need for India to exercise some strategic restraint when it was seeking entry into the 48-country Nuclear Suppliers Group (which was thwarted by China) and the 34-nation Missile Technology Control Regime (which India joined earlier this year).

The tri-Service SFC, established in 2003 to manage India's nuclear arsenal, will have to conduct at least two user-trials before the 50-tonne missile is produced in adequate numbers for induction. While the 17-metre tall Agni-V was tested in an "open configuration" in April 2012 and September 2013, the third test in January 2015 saw it being fired from a hermetically sealed canister mounted on a Tatra launcher truck. The missile's canister-launch version makes it even deadlier since it gives the armed forces requisite flexibility to swiftly transport and fire the missile from anywhere they want.

Once the Agni-V is inducted, India will join the super exclusive club of countries with ICBMs (missiles with a range of over 5,000-5,500km) alongside the US, Russia, China, France and the UK. Apart from the shorter-range Prithvi and Dhanush missiles, the SFC has inducted the Agni-I, Agni-II and Agni-III missiles. While these missiles are mainly geared towards Pakistan, the Agni-IV and Agni-V are specifically meant for deterrence against China. Beijing, of course, is leagues ahead in terms of its missile and nuclear arsenals.

But the Indian defence establishment believes the Agni-V is sufficient to take care of existing threat perceptions. As earlier reported by TOI, DRDO has also done some work on developing "maneuvering warheads or intelligent re-entry vehicles" to defeat enemy ballistic missile defence systems, as well as MIRVs (multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles) for the Agni missiles. An MIRV payload basically means a single

missile is capable of carrying several nuclear warheads, each programmed to hit different targets. Meanwhile, the President of India Pranab Mukherjee has congratulated DRDO on the successful test-firing of intercontinental ballistic missile -- 'Agni-V'.

Source: TOI

BAE Systems Welcomes Signed Letter of Agreement and Acceptance for Indian M777 Howitzers



BAE Systems welcomes the news that the Governments of India and the U.S. have agreed on the Foreign Military Sale of 145 M777 Ultra Lightweight Howitzers. India will join the U.S., Canadian and Australian forces in gaining the M777's unmatched strategic and tactical mobility.

"We look forward to providing the Indian Army with the combat-proven M777," said Dr. Joe Senftle, vice president & general manager for Weapon Systems at BAE Systems. "Our plan to establish a domestic Assembly, Integration and Test facility further demonstrates our commitment to 'Make in India' and remains a firm part of our strategy to work with the Indian defense sector across Air, Land, Sea and Security."

The company anticipates signing a contract in the coming weeks with the U.S. Department of Defense to supply these M777 Howitzers to the Indian Army, providing them with superior artillery capability. At half the weight of other 155mm towed howitzers, the M777 provides a rapid reaction capability and a proven pedigree that delivers decisive firepower when needed most in sustained combat conditions.

With more than 1,090 M777s in service, it is the only battle-proven 155mm Ultra-lightweight howitzer in the world. It will remain at the forefront of artillery technology well into the future through the use of technical insertions, long-range precision guided munition developments, and flexible mobility options. Earlier this year, encouraged by Prime Minister Modi's call to "Make in India", BAE Systems announced a plan to establish an Assembly, Integration & Testing (AIT) facility in India which will expand our global supply chain and is an integral part of the offset offer to the Government of India.

The offset offer commits to investing in, and the development of, a number of Indian defence suppliers, providing them with access to the BAE Systems group across Air, Land, Sea and Security programs. The conclusion of this procurement will enable BAE Systems to make an investment of over \$200 million in those Indian defence suppliers.

India to Train Vietnamese Pilots on Sukhois

Indians will begin training Vietnamese fighter pilots on its Sukhoi-30MKI "air dominance jets" from next year onwards, much like it has been teaching sailors from the country for operations on board Kilo-class submarines for the last three years.

An agreement to this effect was inked on Monday after talks between defence minister Manohar Parrikar and his Vietnamese counterpart General Ngo Xuan Lich, who is leading a mega 30-member military delegation, including the air force and naval chiefs, on a three-day visit to India.

This is in tune with the decision taken during PM Modi's visit to Vietnam last September to "elevate" the bilateral "strategic partnership", which was established in July 2007, to a "comprehensive strategic partnership".

India and Vietnam, of course, are both concerned about China's assertive behaviour in the Asia-Pacific region, and are steadily building cooperation in military training, exercises and defence technology, as well as in joint oil exploration in the contentious South China Sea.

"Both countries are going to further crank up their defence ties, with Parrikar also offering partnership in setting up defence manufacturing capacity in Vietnam. Gen Lich, who also met the PM and national security adviser Ajit Doval on Monday, said he wanted the two countries to also work closely in multilateral fora like the ADMM-Plus (Asean defence ministers' meeting-plus)," said a source.

Source: TOI

Patrol-free, multi-layer smart fence along Pakistan, Bangladesh border by end of 2017: BSF

India will have a patrol-free, multi-layered smart fence along its borders with Pakistan+ and Bangladesh by the later part of 2017 even as 20 big global firms are undertaking a technical evaluation for the same, Director General of BSF KK Sharma said on Wednesday.

Sharma said the force, after getting sanctions from the Union home ministry, is working to implement a Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) where the security of these two sensitive and difficult terrain borders will shift from the regular troops patrolling system to a quick reaction team pattern where guards strike once they notice a blip of infiltration on their surveillance radars.

"We are taking some concerted efforts to modernise our border fence. Twenty big companies are currently undertaking a technical evaluation for the CIBMS. It is expected that it would be on ground by the second half of next year. "In this regard few pilot projects are already on ... two in Jammu and one each in Punjab and Gujarat where we have marshy areas. One project will be done in Assam's Dhubri," the director general said.

He said the effort of the country's largest border guarding force, with about 2.5 lakh personnel in its ranks, is "to modernise itself" as humans have inherent weaknesses and equipment and gadgets act as force multipliers. The DG explained once the CIBMS goes functional, aided by laser fence, surveillance radars, satellite imagery and thermal gadgets, the

troops on ground will respond when there is an alarm of a infiltration bid in the multi-tier security ring comprising the regular fence and laser walls.

Source: PTI

Talks on with Andhra Pradesh govt to convert INS Viraat into luxury hotel-cum-museum: Navy



Talks are underway with the Andhra Pradesh government to convert INS Viraat, the oldest aircraft carrier operated by the Indian Navy, into a luxury hotel-cum-museum after its decommissioning. The carrier is expected to berth on the coast in Visakhapatnam by mid-2017. Addressing media persons onboard INS Shakti in Vishakhapatnam ahead of Navy Day celebrations on Sunday, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Vice-Admiral HCS Bisht said AP was the top contender for getting the majestic warship.

The AP government had shown keen interest on getting INS Viraat to berth in Vizag for promotion of tourism once it is decommissioned and turning it into a ship museum, he said. "In a recent meeting with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Vijayawada, I discussed the modalities and financial feasibility to convert INS-Viraat into a museum-cum-star hotel," Bisht said. According to sources, the state government has drawn up plans to convert INS Viraat into a 500-room hotel. INS Viraat is likely to be decommissioned by end of 2016 or sometime next year after 55 years of service, including 27 years with the Royal Navy (British Navy).

It served as the flagship of Royal Navy's task force during the Falkland Islands campaign in 1982 and was decommissioned from active duty in 1985. It was inducted into Indian Navy in 1987 after undergoing extensive refits. Speaking about ongoing projects, the chief of ENC said that India's first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant was still undergoing various sea trials and it would take more time for commissioning it into the Navy.

INS Arihant is capable of carrying nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, the class referred to as Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear (SSBN). Arihant was launched on July 26, 2009 on the occasion of the anniversary of Vijay Diwas (Kargil War) by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Also, INS Arihant is to be the first of the expected five in the class of submarines designed and constructed as a part of the Indian Navy's secretive Advanced Technology Vessel project, he said. Regarding Navy Alternative Operational Base (NAOB) at Rambilli here which would be made the submarine headquarters, Bisht said land acquisition and resettlement issues were being finalized by the state government.

Source: PTI

INS Sumitra Visits Darwin, Australia



In pursuit of India's 'Act East' policy and outreach to friendly countries, the Indian Navy's Offshore Patrol Vessel Sumitra, has reached Darwin, Australia on December 6. The ship is on a three day visit from 06-09 Dec 16, is on her return passage to India after participating in the Royal New Zealand Navy International Naval Review 2016. The ship had earlier visited Sydney from 04-07 Nov 16.

The visit to Australia is aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and enhancing maritime security cooperation between the two countries. During the stay in harbour, various activities are planned towards enhancing cooperation and mutual understanding between the two navies such as professional interactions with RAN and discussions towards further enhancing inter-operability. In addition, calls on senior government and military authorities, sporting and cultural interactions and sharing of best practices would also be undertaken. On departure, the ship would also undertake a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with RAN ships.

Sumitra, is the fourth of the Saryu class ships, based on an indigenous design and constructed by Goa Shipyard Ltd, India. Since commissioning in 2014, the ship has been deployed for multiple operational tasks, the most notable being 'Operation Rahat', which entailed the evacuation of personnel of various nationalities from war-torn Yemen in 2015. The ship has a range of 6,500 nautical miles and is capable of embarking one Dhruv/Chetak helicopter. The ship is commanded by Cdr KP Shreeshan.

Army Called Out for war on Black Money

Everybody agreed that the government needed to work on a 'war-footing' to ease the currency crisis. But the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took it literally and called in the army. At least 200 army men have been posted at the currency note printing unit in Mysuru to assist its staff in the 24x7 printing process.

Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran in Mysuru is the main unit which prints and supplies new currency notes for the RBI. While previously two-three of its five mains were operational, in the light of the emergency, all five mains were made functional. On Tuesday, the unit printed ₹5.1 crore. The staff works round the clock too in three shifts.

The army men have been helping out with the physically laborious printing routine, which includes transporting the

paper, loading the machines, overseeing the printing process, packaging, loading and unloading, and various other tasks, all done under strict protocol and high security. The men are also ensuring security during the process.

Sources at the Mysuru unit, which has about 600 employees, said they were relieved to get the extra hands. "Since the demonetisation, our work here had multiplied to a degree that required assistance. With the army men, we're working more efficiently and vigorously - like it's a battleground," said a source. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sudden announcement on November 8, rendering old 500- and 1,000-rupee notes obsolete, threw the country into a note crisis. The Mysuru printing unit, meanwhile, has been running on full throttle.

Source: Bangalore Mirror

Telangana Govt Waives off Property, Vehicle Tax for Ex-Faujis

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao on December 24 while chairing a high-level review meeting on the welfare of the retired military personnel, announced the introduction of a double pension scheme for former Faujis, along with other subsequent waivers in property and vehicle tax.

The double pension benefit will also be given to the spouse in case of death of the army pensioner. This pension will also be paid along with pensions of other employees every month. He has also decided to extend benefits given to the army personnel martyred while serving to those lost their lives due to ill health and accidents too. He has instructed the officials not to show any discrimination in this regard and said that retired army personnel working as Special Police Officers will be paid salaries along with other employees every month.

This had been preceded by the state government announcing exemption in property tax according to a notice released by Telangana government's secretary Navin Mittal on December 12 through the municipal administration and urban development department. The property tax exemption will be applicable to those houses where the immediate kith and kin of the deceased-retired ex-servicemen are residing with no restriction on the size or the floor of the house. The exemption will however be granted to only one house, even if the ex-servicemen and his spouse have two different houses in their names, according to the notice.

Meanwhile, Rao also said there is a need to strengthen the Army Welfare Boards. There are only 10 Sainik Welfare Boards in the districts, which will be extended to all the newly formed districts in the state. He said steps will be taken to set up two Army Welfare Offices in Medak and Adilabad districts.

The compensation money given for those getting the gallantry awards would be more in the Telangana state compared to other states. He also said that reservation should be given to the children of serving and retired army personnel in the government residential Schools.

"The state government should accord recognition to the schools run by the army. Students joining NCC, Scouts and Guides should be encouraged and those pursuing courses in National Defence Academy from the State should be given fellowships," Rao said. Since the Centre has agreed to set up an Army School in Warangal, Rao said, a Memorandum of Understanding in this regard will be signed as early as possible.

The Last Word



MAROOF RAZA

THE DEBATE OVER THE NEW ARMY CHIEF

In what was expected to be a routine announcement, the government's choice of the new army chief took everyone by surprise, including I suppose General Rawat himself. But as in any democracy (as even Pakistan has just shown) the political leadership of the day enjoys the prerogative to make the appointment of a service chief, even though our politicians know little about our military's ways and ethos, and nor do they know most of our senior commanders. Besides they needn't be bound by the seniority principle. This point wasn't reinforced strongly enough.

However the questions raised by politicians from the Congress Party – of all the people – about the decision of this government, happily ignores the role of their earlier leaders who in the past had sidestepped outstanding officers for the job of army chief, for more political reasons than perhaps in this recent instance. Mrs Gandhi had not only sidestepped India's foremost soldier scholar, Lt Gen SK Sinha, but she also chose to bypass Lt Gen Prem Bhagat, VC, as Pandit Nehru did with Lt Gen DDP Thorat. All of them were exceptional generals, whose popularity within the army made their political leaders nervous. But this isn't the case now. In the current situation, all the three contenders for the post of army chief aren't seen as a threat by our politicians, and all have had an impressive professional track record.

We are told, that the government made the choice of General Rawat based on his vast CI Ops experience, a key operational challenge that our soldiers will continue to face. But those presenting a counter argument – based on requirement to adhere to the seniority principle – insist that the essential job of the army chief is to keep the army ready to defend our borders, and thus, CI Ops experience shouldn't just be the benchmark. And even there, General Rawat has enough command and staff experience to understand, all the army's needs. Few have however talked about the need to review how

some good officers are in contention for this coveted job, while others get marginalized. This is the issue that needs to be addressed in all honesty.

Blind adherence to the order of merit obtained while passing out of the military academy and elimination of contenders on the basis of date of birth in later years, (and in some cases the manipulation of the line of succession) also needs to be seriously questioned. While the order of merit obtained at the time of commissioning is based more on cadet-like qualities with a lot of emphasis on outdoor activities; the abilities demanded at the highest levels of ranks, require quite the opposite skills. This order of merit hangover was perhaps copied from the civil services, wherein they are tested and ranked only once – at their entrance exams – and allowed to sail along for the next four decades!

But as the selection to higher military ranks is highly competitive, with rejection more the norm than selection, there is no reason to retain the commissioning order of merit, but to make a merit list for each higher rank following the deep selection process.

Moreover the army's insistence of retaining the two year residual service rule, to appoint army commanders, ends up eliminating many capable officers from the race. This too needs to be changed, as this isn't implemented. Though it was done to provide continuity in command, many of the officers promoted to army commander's rank do not serve in a single command for a two year period.

Both General Rawat and Lt Gen Hariz are the latest cases in point. This two year rule wasn't followed even in the case of General Suhag, whatever the reasons. But if these criteria were set aside, the seniority list today would have looked very different, as it would've many times over past three decades, after it was first implemented. That is what needs to be changed, if we are to truly follow the seniority principle. ■

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