

The Rimcollian

(Newsletter of the Old Boys Association of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun)

TALES OF GALLANTRY



COVIDDIARY
The World Shutdown but RIMC
Remained Functional—Page19

EDITOR'S MAILBOX

Dear Sir, Greetings,

Please refer to The Rimcollian Vol XIV September 2020. page 26 and 27. The write up on SahibZada Yakub Khan.

I HAVE STRONG OBJECTION ON GLORIFYING SAHIBZADA YAKUB KHAN A PAKISTANI.

RIMC was established in 1922. 25 years to the partition there were cadets from the erstwhile British India. Subsequently on partition on 15 August 1947 the Muslim Cadets on their own will got transferred to Pakistan and the Cadets of other Religion rightfully continued in Secular India. From then on RIMC has gone 73 years in India. Come 2022, Rashtriya Indian Military College completes 75 years in Independent India (erstwhile name prior Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College).

RIMC is a Category A establishment of the Indian Army. The Old Boys Association though an Independent body is an off shoot from an organization of Indian Army.

Glorifying a Pakistani in two pages of the magazine is highly objectionable. If this man was so good then he should have endeavored to get a lasting peace to the Indo Pak issues, having served as a foreign minister of Pakistan for about 25 years.

He is an alumuni of the Indian Military Academy. Never have I heard and read IMA glorifying him. During the 73 years period of RIMC in Independent India many a Military and Civilian heroes have excelled in their field. I recently spoke to Col Gidh to ask Sidharth Mishra to publish a full interview on Gen VN Sharma, especially as Army Commander Eastern Army, on his insistence that there will be no comprise on throwing out the Chinese out of the Sumdrochung valley, though the narrative in North Block was to settle the matter peacefully. Sumdrochung is with India because of his stand. There are many Rimcollians who have excelled in warfare in the last 73 years of Indian History. Please glorify Rimcollian Hero's post-independence rather a Pakistani who has been always India's enemy. I like to seek an assurance for the editorial team of The Rimcollian, that in future No Pakistani Rimcollian will find mentioned in the newsletter.

Regards,

—Colonel Priotosh Deb (retd) Mobile 8999858103

EDITOR'S REPLY: While we much appreciate your observation and feedback but the right to choose content for the publication remains with the Editorial Committee.

Dear Editorial Team,

I am in receipt of the Sept 2020 issue. I would like to place on record and commend the efforts of the Editorial Team by keeping all Rimcollians updated about the latest in school. It is always a good feeling to receive a copy of the newsletter.

I would also like to thank Mr Chiranjit Banerjee for penning down a very comprehensive article regarding the Reunion 2020. It was indeed a very memorable get-together this year, a bit different from the normal ones, but enjoyable to the hilt.

Thank you once again and "KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK".

—Lt Col Ajay Kaila. Chandragupta 1977-1982, New Delhi

Dear Editorial Team,

It was a pleasure to receive the Rimcollian Calendars 2021. The wall and desk calendars have come out very well. Our compliments to Mr Sidharth Mishra and the ROBA Editorial Team.

—Col Vijay Gidh, Pune

Dear Editorial Team,

Received a very welcome, surprising, humbling and yet elating gift in the form of the Centenary Calendar. Being the underground, low flying type, living in the camel cart pace city of Bikaner, I never expected this singular honour from my Alma Mater.

Thanks to Sidharth and all those who deemed me fit for this landmark calendar.

I shared the November page with my battalion CO. He wants to order 100 copies or more. Is it OK? How do we procure them? I too would like 5 personal copies. Kindly advise.

Thanks, and Regards.

—Maj Gen Abhaya K Gupta, Bikaner

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your email below enclosing the eEdition of The Rimcollian. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and thank you for the same. My WhatsApp no is +65 93893158.

Once again thank you. Thanks, and Best Regards.

—Jagan aka Muthu Jagannath, Singapore

WRITE TO EDITOR
with your valuable feedback
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editor's note



Air Marshal PP Reddy (retd)
PVSM, VM

Dear Rimcollians,

I take this opportunity to wish all Rimcollians and their families a very healthy and happy 2021. While the Chinese virus continues to haunt us, our alma mater has done very well to continue with the training uninterrupted, taking exemplary care of the cadets. Kudos to the staff at RIMC. It has been a year since the pandemic hit us and we all seem to have got used to wearing the face masks and maintaining social distance while we go about our lives and wait for the vaccine.

And so does the editorial team, bringing out two editions of the magazine and the 2021 calendar on time. The 2021 calendar is the last in the Centenary series highlighting the gallantry award winners from RIMC. The calendar has been highly appreciated and we had to go in for reprint to meet the demand. Credit goes to Sidharth Mishra for the conceptualisation and research put in to bring out the collector's item. The editorial team is now contemplating the 2022 Centennial calendar and looking at various themes. Suggestions in this regard are welcome.

Our boys are doing extremely well at NDA and IMA. Once again, the credit goes to the staff at RIMC who are so dedicated and work so hard to groom the future officers of our Defence forces. Hats off to them.

This issue has several interesting articles covering hardships faced in the forward areas to adventure sports and get-togethers. We in the editorial team fervently hope that the magazine will keep you engrossed for a few moments. Happy reading.

We lost an ardent and learned Rimcollian Dr Narayan Madhav Ghatate, who passed away in January. I had the opportunity to interact with him when I was the President ROBA and was touched by his simplicity and love for the Alma mater. May his soul rest in peace.

Ich Dien

Air Marshal PP Reddy (retd)
PVSM, VM

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT



Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa (Retd)
PVSM, AVSM, YSM VM
President ROBA

Rimcollian Old Boys Association
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Greetings to all the Rimcollians and their families. The year 2020 has now passed with its ups and downs due to the Covid-19 pandemic which is now hopefully slowing down in its intensity. I look forward to the year 2021 and the upcoming vaccination drive to help us move forward with a positive and cheerful note to overcome this once in a century adverse phase in our lives in the year gone by. Our fraternity stood by the motto of our alma mater "Ich Dien - I Serve" and came out with flying colours as usual.

It is not out of the place to put on record the outstanding performance of the College and our Cadets, who weathered all the challenges of the pandemic while ensuring the safety of Cadets and employees. RIMC was perhaps the only boarding school in the Country that continued its academic curriculum despite the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The 100th Founders Day Celebrations of the college is barely a year from now and the volume of work involved is enormous in terms of its planning and execution. The Centenary Celebrations Committee (CCC) constituted could not do much in wake of the pandemic last year. Ongoing collation of data of Rimcollians is also not encouraging as very few have responded to the call for updating of data. It is once again reiterated to all the Rimcollians to kindly share their personal details with the Centenary Cell.

I wish all Rimcollians and their families the very best and a Happy Holi in the days to come.

GOD BLESS RIMCOLLIANS - ICH DIEN.

Air Chief Mshl BS Dhanoa (Retd)
PVSM, AVSM, YSM, VM
Hony President, ROBA

FROM ROBA SECRETARY'S DESK

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UPDATE FROM SECRETARY'S DESK

Dear Rimcollians,

The 100th Founder's Day Function and the alumni meet is barely a year from now. As mentioned earlier, the biggest challenge is to raise the finances to meet the requirements of the milestone event. We started the process of collecting the subscriptions for the Centenary Celebrations from the year 2016 and till date only about 500 odd Rimcollians have contributed in advance, out of the expected strength of 1000 Rimcollians, which is not even half of the expected gathering. So, it is once again emphasised in view of the precariously little time left for the Mega Event that, all those who have not contributed till now may please do so post haste.

Your donation towards the Centenary Fund and also towards the Membership Fee (Rs 3000/-), Magazine Fund (Rs 2000/-) and ROBA Trust (Rs 5000/-) entitles you to a tax rebate under Rule 80G of the Income Tax Act.

Even throughout the pandemic, the College, the ROBA Office Bearers and the Centenary Cell at the College have been working relentlessly on for the forthcoming Centenary Celebrations by holding online and physical meetings. Time and again, I have been requesting for volunteers from all spheres of the fraternity to form a cohesive force to work upon the conduct, planning and finances for our Centenary Celebrations. Till now, the response has not been very encouraging, keeping in view the mammoth task of the celebrations.

Updating of Personal Particulars of all Rimcollians is underway for the last 1½ years but the data received is far too meagre in terms of members enrolled. Please send in your particulars at robaoffice@gmail.com ON PRIORITY. Without the requisite information, the compilation of the Centennial Alumni Book would be an incomplete exercise.

Looking Forward To Your Continued Patronage.

Ich Dien & with Warm regards,

May the tribe grow & shine.

Yours sincerely,
Deepak Ahluwalia

"ICH-DIEN"



2021

WHERE GALLANTRY IS TRADITION CENTENARY SERIES

Dehradun is home to Rimcollians - the alumni of Rashtriya Indian Military College. Founded on 13 March 1922, this school has provided leaders par excellence. Its founder Prince of Wales, later King Edward, had said, "It is the first few blows on the anvil of the life that give the human weapon the set and temper that carry him through life's battles." As the college moves towards celebrating the centenary of its worthy existence, we unveil the FOURTH in the series of calendars recalling our contribution to the nation and the society.



Rimcollians, as the alumni of RIMC are referred to, is a unique breed of humans mentored from their boyhood to stand in the defence of the nation.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In chronicling our illustrious history, we have chosen this year, the post-Independence war of 1971 and several other military operations which took place post-1971, where Rimcollians conducted themselves with great glory at various levels of leadership.

The calendar content is largely based on the inputs from reliable sources and government records. Quality of some pictures may not be upto the mark because of the poor state/non-availability of original records. Hope you enjoy these glimpses into the glorious achievements of our alumni in defence of our nation.

—Air Marshal PP Reddy (Retd)

CONCEPT/RESEARCH - SIDHARTH MISHRA ; RESEARCH ASSISTANCE: COL SHAILENDER ARYA; CMDE NAJ JOSEPH



SUPREME SACRIFICE AT ARABIAN SEA 1971



INS Khukri (F149) commissioned in 1958, served in the Portuguese-Indian War and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971

INS Khukri. During the 1971 War, on December 9, a torpedo launched by a Pakistani submarine sank INS Khukri, which was carrying out a submarine hunt. Lieutenant Commander Rajat Kumar Sen was supply officer of the ship. On realizing the danger to his men, Lieutenant Commander Sen went below to get his sailors to safety. In the meantime, the ship was hit by another torpedo. Despite the fact that the chances of his survival were minimal as the ship was sinking, he continued to help his men to safety and in doing so made the supreme sacrifice. Throughout, Lieutenant Commander Sen displayed courage and devotion to duty of a high order. A medal has been instituted at the school in his memory.

Ich Dien - I Serve

THE HERO



LT CDR
RAJAT KUMAR SEN



VIR CHAKRA



FALCONS OF CHHAMB 1971



SU-7 aircraft operated by 101 Squadron of the IAF, popularly known as the FALCONS OF CHHAMB

Chhamb-Jaurian. During the operations against Pakistan in December, 1971, as a pilot in a Fighter Bomber Squadron, Flight Lieutenant Robindra Kumar Sinha flew a number of operational missions. Some of these missions were for photo/visual reconnaissance deep inside the enemy territory, and the information brought by him helped to plan subsequent strike missions, which successfully destroyed enemy targets. He also flew many operational missions in support of our ground forces in Chhamb-Jaurian sector and destroyed four enemy tanks and several vehicles despite heavy ground fire and air opposition. Throughout, Flight Lieutenant Robindra Kumar Sinha displayed gallantry, professional skill and devotion to duty of a high order.

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THE HERO



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT
ROBINDRA KUMAR SINHA



VIR CHAKRA



WANDUNG STANDOFF 1987

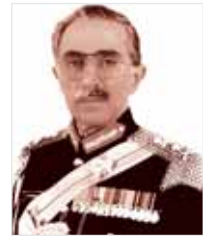


War Memorial, Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

Tawang. General Vishwa Nath Sharma took over as GOC-in-C of the Eastern Command on 1 June 1987 and remained in office till May 1988, before moving to New Delhi as Chief of Army Staff. During, his tenure in the East, China moved troops to Wandung, a pasture South of Sumdorong Chu Valley bordering the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, which lies in Indian territory. The Indian troops stood ground on the neighbouring Longro La ridge. Both sides moved a large number of troops to the border. Despite pressure, both international and political, Army held its ground and saved Tawang from being taken over by China. General Sharma's leadership in the East got Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi an invitation from top Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping to 'discuss border issues'. Gen Sharma's elder brother was Maj Som Nath Sharma who met martyrdom in 1947 in J&K, winning the first Param Vir Chakra.

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THE HERO



GENERAL
VISHWA NATH SHARMA



PARAM VISHISHT SEVA MEDAL



SRI LANKA 1987



Op Pawan by Indian Peace Keeping Force was to take control of Jaffna from LTTE as a part of the India-Sri Lanka Accord

Op Pawan. Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) Manoranjan Singh, as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka, was tasked to capture Kopai North, a citadel of the militants on 13 October 1987. His battalion made repeated attempts to capture this strongly held fortified militants' position, but met with strong resistance. Undaunted by the odds against him, Lieutenant Colonel Singh personally led the attack by his battalion on 18 October 1987 and, after a prolonged and bloody encounter, captured the prestigious stronghold. The battalion also captured intact a factory of the militants for making explosive devices and seized 1000 kilograms of explosives. Throughout this operation, Lieutenant Colonel Manoranjan Singh displayed conspicuous bravery and qualities of aggressive leadership.

Ich Dien - I Serve

THE HERO



BRIGADIER
MANORANJAN SINGH



VIR CHAKRA



OP CACTUS 1988



Hulhule airstrip, where Il-76s of IAF landed blind on the night of 3 November 1988

Hulhule (Male). In 1988 a group of Maldivians led by businessman Abdullah Luthufi and assisted by armed mercenaries of a secessionist organisation from Sri Lanka, tried to overthrow the government in the island republic of Maldives. The coup d'état failed after the Indian Special Forces eliminated the rebels under an operation code named Cactus. No. 44 Sq of IAF was tasked to airlift 6 Para Battalion and 17 Para Field Artillery from Agra to Hulhule. There was a lingering uncertainty about the security of the runway at Hulhule. Gp Capt A G Bewoor flew the first Il-76 into Male, with Para commandos onboard, flying a record 3500 kms and land blind on an unknown runway at night without normal runway lights, and without any support from friendly forces on ground except the codeword from Air Traffic Control -- Hudia. This, along with the other acts earned him the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) in 1990.

Ich Dien - I Serve

THE HERO



GROUP CAPTAIN
ANANT GOPAL BEWOOR



VAYU SENA MEDAL



OP VIJAY 1999



Indian troops celebrating victory in Kargil conflict after pushing back Pakistani forces

Kargil. There were three major phases to the Kargil War of 1999. First, Pakistan infiltrated forces into Jammu & Kashmir and occupied strategic locations enabling it to bring NH1 within range of its artillery fire. The next stage consisted of India discovering the infiltration and mobilising forces to respond to it. The final stage involved major battles by Indian and Pakistani forces resulting in India recapturing most of the territories and pushing Pakistani forces back across the LOC. Despite initial setback, Lt Gen HM Khanna, GOC-in-C, Northern Command, showed exemplary calm in galvanizing forces for an effective counter attack, named Op Vijay. He was awarded Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal for leading the forces to a spectacular victory

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THE HERO



LIEUTENANT GENERAL
HARI MOHAN KHANNA



SARVOTTAM YUDH
SEVA MEDAL



OP SAFED SAGAR 1999



A painting of Mirage 2000 dropping Laser guided bomb over Tiger Hill
Painting By: Group Captain Deb Gohain

Kargil. The Indian Air Force launched Operation Safed Sagar in support of the mobilisation of the Army on 26 May 1999. The Govt cleared limited use of Air Power with the fiat that fighter jets were not to cross the LOC under any circumstance. This was the first time any air war was fought at such high altitudes globally. The total air dominance of the IAF gave the forces on the ground adequate power for a real lethal counter-attack. The air operations were led by Air Marshal Vinod Patney, AOC-in-C, Western Air Command. In his words, 'Safed Sagar took the international community by surprise as we managed to carry out successful mission for days at stretch in such a difficult terrain.' Patney was awarded Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal, having won the Vir Chakra during the 1965 war.

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THE HERO



AIR MARSHAL
VINOD PATNEY



SARVOTTAMYUDH SEVA MEDAL



GUNS IN CONCERT



The Bofors guns in action during the Kargil war

Kargil. Operation Vijay posed a challenge of a magnitude never faced by the Indian artillery in any of the previous wars. While young FOOs and battery commanders fought shoulder to shoulder with the infantry, sustained and accurate shooting was done by the artillery guns. Shooting was so accurate that the infantry would at times call for artillery fire just 40 metres above them, when normal safety distances were much higher. Such was the value attached to direct artillery fire to keep the enemy's head down. A soft-spoken gunner, Lt Gen Vinay Shankar, as Director-General Artillery, masterminded the most devastating gunfire in world's military history. Kargil operations saw over a 100 artillery guns firing in concert for days at a stretch and decimating each enemy target.

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THE HERO



LT GENERAL
VINAY SHANKAR



PARAMVISHISHT SEVA MEDAL



GOLDEN ARROWS



On May 27, 2019 Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa led four aircraft, MiG 21 'Missing Man' formation flypast at Air Force Station Bhisiana in Bhatinda, Punjab to honour valour, supreme sacrifice of men killed in action during Operation Safed Sagar at Kargil

Kargil. The Indian Air Force launched Operation Safed Sagar in support of the mobilisation of land forces on 26 May 1999. This was the first time any air war was fought at such high altitudes globally. Air Chief Marshal (then Wing Commander) Birender Singh Dhanoa was commanding a front-line ground attack fighter squadron - Golden Arrows. Under his leadership the squadron devised innovative methods of night bombing at high altitudes which had never been attempted before. His squadron was adjudged the best fighter squadron of HQ Western Air Command. He was awarded Yudh Seva Medal (YSM) and Vayu Sena Medal (VM) for his gallant actions in this conflict. The squadron was disbanded in 2016 as MiGs were phased out to be resurrected for induction of Rafale jets. Incidentally, the air operations were led by Air Marshal Vinod Patney, AOC-in-C, WAC and a Rimcollian.

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THE HERO



AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
**BIRENDER SINGH
DHANOA**



YUDDH SEVA MEDAL



SECURING SRINAGAR 1999



Marine Commandos belonging to Indian Navy maintaining a vigil on the waterways in Kashmir Valley

Wular. During Kargil War, deployment of Marine Commandos of the Indian Navy in the Jhelum River and Wular Lake, closed the second route for the militants to reach Srinagar. Militants were forced to travel through the conventional mountain route, where they were effectively countered thus securing capital of Jammu & Kashmir. Lieutenant (IN) DB Singh was attached to an Army unit in Bandipore which had effectively neutralised any enemy activity in the lake waters. Leading one such mission, soon after it was declared that Kargil operations had ended, Lt (IN) DB Singh met martyrdom when an IED exploded. He thus became the first Marine Commando to die in Kashmir defending the nation.

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THE HERO



LIEUTENANT (IN)
DB SINGH



MARCOS



OP BLACK TORNADO 2008



Maj Gen Abhaya Kumar Gupta with Mr Ratan Tata, Chairman, Tata Group, at Taj Mahal Hotel after eliminating the terrorists and securing the hostages

Mumbai. On 26 November 2008, ten highly motivated, well-trained and heavily armed terrorists slipped past coastal security cordon and reached Mumbai. Over the next three days the Fidayeen wreaked havoc holding India's commercial capital hostage. The 26/11 attacks, as they are now known, are widely regarded as the world's first hybrid terrorist attack. The attack tested the mettle of India's elite counter-terrorist force, the National Security Guard. Black Tornado, as the operation was called by the NSG, saw NSG troops in continuous operations, going without sleep from the night of 26 November to the morning of 29 November, when it was announced that the task of eliminating terrorists and securing the hostages has been completed. The man at the helm of the task was Maj Gen Abhaya Kumar Gupta, IG (Operations).

Ich Dien - I Serve

THE HERO



MAJOR GENERAL
ABHAYA KUMAR GUPTA



SENA MEDAL



OP BANDAR 2019



The IAF used its Mirage-2000 fighter jets to carry out the Balakot airstrike

Balakot. In the early morning hours of 26 February 2019, Indian planes crossed the LoC and dropped bombs in the town of Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The airstrike, code named Op Bandar, was directed against a terrorist training camp, and caused death of a large number of terrorists. This punitive air strike changed the security narrative. Having been a victim of the Pakistani deep state's sponsored terrorism for too long, India raised the cost for Islamabad with the punitive air strike. A new normal also emerged and India's political leadership realised that use of airpower need not be escalatory; that there exists a large window for sub-conventional or limited war options between two nuclear powers. The air strike was planned and supervised by AOC-in-C, Western Air Command, Air Marshal C Hari Kumar.

Ich Dien - I Serve

THE HERO



AIR MARSHAL
C HARI KUMAR



PARAM VISHISHT
SEVA MEDAL

Thoughts on Centenary Series Calendar 2021

— MAJ GEN H DHARMARAJAN
1978-82, Chandragupta

Dear Sidharth,

The ROBA Calendar 2021 shows that indeed a tremendous amount of work that must have gone in, visible all the way. Meticulous compilation, Designing, every single page setting, fitting in everything, kerning of text, Proof reading, Balancing the Services must have been tough — 5 (Army) + 5 (IAF) + 2 (Navy).

Was wondering if Cmde Anil Joseph or Admiral Bimal Verma or Admiral Randhawa would ask for more Navy in it. Not sure if we have Naval names who participated in INS Betwa, or in other operations in Maldives or in Sri Lanka in INS Magar or INS Sandhayak etc.

Any such compilation (like schools' comparison also happens in education journals) would also come up for some critique, so that is normal when tight-space management is tough like in a newspaper. In case it competitively kindles more (or any new flurry) names on offer, may be worthwhile to come up with another Apr-21 to Mar-22 calendar too like what we tried in 2009-2010, I think.

Especially, there may be an observation that "Infantry" (Queen of the Battlefield) could have a little more coverage... For 1971 - Blue Star - J & K - NE Insurgency - Parakram - RR - China (Northern Borders) - Snow Leopard etc. Not sure if there is any void of Old Boy names for that entire span of time?

Sidharth Mishra replies: Dear Sir, much grateful for your very well-thought observations. Four years back when we the first thought came to publish the centenary series calendars, we planned to make gallantry awards as the theme for



these almanacs and in these four years we have covered - World War II, Jammu & Kashmir Ops, 1962-65-71 and now 1971-onwards. One of the major problems has been that the names on the school honour boards are not always backed by a supporting document say the citation. Thereafter, the scope of research was widened beyond the school archives

and with help of very well-trained young media researchers, have been able to dig out the information. On occasions when I hit a wall, two gunners divided by several generations - Maj Gen SVP Singh and Col Shailender Arya helped out, so did late Brig CS Thapa during the making of the first calendar. While doing these calendars we have actually scratched the bottom of the barrel to put them together. Will be writing to the school, to look into the incongruities which exists on the gallantry award honour board. Given my non-defence background, having Air Marshal PP Reddy as the Editor has greatly helped, so having Colonel Sanjay Kannoth as the sounding board to some critical inputs. The centenary calendar series will manage to complete the full run thanks to the aggressive marketing by our treasurer Maj MS Bedi and my cadet guardian Cmde Anil Joseph.

Maj Gen Dharmarajan's reply to above: Can well imagine the humongous task that it is. Always a huge challenge when there are so many corners to cover. I realised as Commandant that no one actually keeps the College in the picture of anything. Your stellar efforts are already and further are going to be extraordinary collations for sure.

Centenary Compilation is turning out to be an eyebrow raising revelation in every dimension. No one in any unit till now has actually been told about his Old Boy ancestry ever. And just by word of mouth as far as one can remember some names (beyond the known College time contemporaries) have been passed down the line. It is only now that the gem-studded history is actually getting compiled beyond the boards of cadets, and the senior anteroom photos in the College. ■

As the Pandemic Struck, The World Shutdown but RIMC Remained Functional

— **LT COL GAURAV HAMAL**
Shivaji, 1990-95, Administrative Officer



Our alma mater refused to get bogged down as it fought pandemic upfront

Photo: Vandana Hamal

China, as is the custom with them, quite surreptitiously (or was it deliberate and pre-planned - we'll possibly never know) unleashed a Black Swan event on the world from a nondescript wet market in Wuhan. The unprecedented speed of the spread coupled with hitherto fore uncharted and undocumented medical challenges and the fear of the unknown threw everything out of balance. And when a Black Swan event of this magnitude and unexpected swiftness is followed by a nation-wide lockdown, another Black Swan event, life, comes to a grinding halt.

Employment, meetings with friends, dining out, shopping for grocery or just

taking a walk - routine activities that we took for granted became a distant memory as the nation was confined indoors. Schools shut down, economic activity stuttered and ultimately came to a screeching halt, indices around the world came crashing down wiping out trillions of dollars' worth of market cap and common folks who had to work each day for earning their daily bread teetered on the brink of starvation.

Statistics aside, the human cost of this pandemic has been staggering. The pandemic that made words like social distancing and sanitisation take on a whole new meaning extracted its pound of flesh from us humans (which according to the UNCTAD is going to

cost the world economy \$1 trillion in 2020.) Though the upside of all this was that the climate benefitted in all those days of halted economic activity - the air became clear, birds could be heard chirping and the rare sighting of birds and animals in an urban milieu became commonplace. We lost a fair bit, and then some. The migrant labourer lost his sense of self-worth, his family back in the hinterland lost the assurance of the meagre roti that became hard to come by, and while countless blue and white-collar workers lost their jobs, they did not lose the EMIs on the loans taken in happier times. It was a year of losses - some unspoken, others not so much.



The deserted streets of Dehradun during the extended period of lock down

Photo: ANI

PANDEMIC IN DOON

As the news of the pandemic and the looming lockdown broke, schools in the Doon valley, and surely across the country shut down post haste and despatched children back in droves. Long lines of cars could be seen parked outside the gates of some of the well-known residential schools of the valley as parents jostled to take their children, fill in the formalities and make the drive back to their respective native places before the lockdown came into effect.

We, here at the RIMC, like the rest of the world, were not left untouched. The fact that we were a functioning military unit in addition to being a residential school put us in a uniquely unenviable position. In addition to the loss of academic instruction we were also concerned with the preparation of the senior classes for the NDA Written exams, something that has a structured syllabus and a unique approach and regimen that we follow in RIMC. Sending these cadets back would mean that they would lose out on these structured, focussed classes. In addition, they would also be at sea while facing the Boards Exams.

Just to refresh everyone's collective memory here, we are the one unique school in the country that conducts Class X and Class XII Boards Exams twice a year. These were imponderables that

merited serious thought, and brainstorm we did. The Grand War Council of RIMC comprising the Commandant (Col Ajay Kumar), the Administrative Officer (self) and the Assistant Adm Officer (Lt Col Gyan Ranjan Sahu) put their heads together and cogitated upon the pros and cons of proposed moves and counter moves and the effect it would have on academics, training and most importantly administration - the silent, invisible lubricant that keeps the wheels of RIMC turning without a squeak, and without which there would be unmitigated tumult and pandemonium!

ROLLING OUT PROTOCOLS

True to our unyielding military roots grown deep in this very campus, we decided to face the belligerent virus head on and hold our ground. The very first decision that was taken in this regard was not to hold the 98th Reunion within the premises of the College and deny entry to everybody - Rimcollians included.

Difficult as this decision was, accompanied by demurred protests and some not so muted, good-natured bellyaching, this probably helped us avoid the first onslaught of the



All quiet on the Camphor Avenue on March 13, 2020

Photo: Col Sanjay Kannoth



The hail storm could not contain the enthusiasm of the Old Boys at the DSOI

contagion. The decision, arrived after weighing the severity of the pandemic in mind, was executed well before the national lockdown kicked in and the imposing portals of RIMC clanged shut for outsiders on 10th March 2020.

The Rimcollians, understandably did feel a little dismayed from this but most of them accepted that it was the greater good of the College. Indeed, there were many who had travelled from across the length and breadth of the country to be present for the Reunion but had to contend with a watered-down version of the event at the Defence Services Officers Institute (DSOI), which they did with good cheer and nary a nag.

At the same time the war council again convened in the Commandant's office and after many hours of charged brainstorming arrived at a workable roadmap for keeping the College locked down while letting the administration run things as close to a semblance of normalcy as possible within the ambit of the stringent instructions and COVID protocols that the Army had passed for keeping ourselves insulated and safe.

THE SILENT MACHINE

The challenge was to follow the COVID protocols to the T and yet keep life going as close to normal as possible without allowing a perceptible hitch in the cadets' academic, extra-curricular, co-curricular and games routine. This

presented itself as a novel challenge and it did take a certain amount of subtly ingenious planning to work around the curbs put in place by the COVID-19 protocols and the lockdown outside the walls of the campus that had started to affect us in more ways than one. The challenges we faced were manifold - access control to RIMC, keeping the routine within the campus as close to normal as possible within the laid down COVID protocols, being medically and administratively prepared to face the onslaught of the pandemic while also assuaging the fears of the parents about the safety and well-being of their wards.

To this end a slew of measures were instituted to keep the routine going. The staff and faculty residing outside the College premises were asked to stay out till further orders. This, understandably put a lot of administrative load on people that were residing inside the College and they rose to the occasion cheerfully and calmly shouldering additional responsibilities without a nag. The College was being run on a skeleton staff but yet all tasks were being executed with the same efficiency. As cadets here nearly thirty years back we took this hidden efficiency for granted - we just assumed that things happened like clockwork, well, because they did, of their own volition. Little realising that behind the scenes there was this silently running mechanism - comprising

officers, military personnel and Group C employees that worked around the clock to keep things going with efficient precision.

CRACK DOWN

In the current times, that was one thing that had to be kept going: the silent efficiency - come hell or high water (or in this case a virulent contagion that was possibly genetically engineered for world domination!).

And that's what we did - we went about being efficient, without Tom-Tomming about it. Provisions, rations - both fresh and dry, condiments, washing and cleaning supplies, gardening supplies & implements, administrative stores, Ordnance issue items, clothing items, shoes, CSD stores and myriad other impedimenta that might be needed to keep the College running had to be planned, provisioned and stocked. The provision of dry rations, vegetables and fruits for cadets and staff living within the campus was done by contracting a common vendor and asking him to make these things available within the campus. It was ensured that there is no shortage of fruits, vegetables, milk and rations for cadets and staff alike. All the raw materials for preparing food were thoroughly disinfected: vegetables were being washed with mild detergent and thoroughly cleaned, the sealed packets of condiments and other provisions

COVID DIARY

were sanitised thoroughly. Variety in meals was ensured with emphasis on nutritious, wholesome nourishment by making available a selection of leafy greens and fresh fruits for cadets. In addition, cadets were also given Vitamin 'C' and Vitamin 'D' in prescribed dosages.

To maintain the highest standards of hygiene and disinfection, regular hand washing and gargling parades were routinely organised for cadets. Hot water was made available for drinking in all dorms 24x7 and liberal supplies of salt were provisioned should there be need for it for the purpose of gargling outside of the organised parades. They were also issued with individual hand sanitizer bottles, a number of face masks and sanitizer sprays to be carried with them at all times. Copious and regular disinfection with Sodium Hypochlorite solutions and Cresol black was being carried out in the dormitories, bathrooms, classes and all other places being frequented by the cadets. Linen was routinely disinfected by Sodium Hypochlorite and sun-dried while the bedding and mattresses were being exposed to the sun regularly.

Meals in Cadets' Mess were staggered, dished out in the Central Lawn as a buffet and served class wise ensuring social distancing and minimal



interaction with the waiters. All staff members such as waiters, housekeeping staff and groundsmen strictly adhered to wearing face masks and gloves and washing hands at regular intervals.

On the sage advice of the Resident Medical Officer, the cadets were segregated class-wise and housed in class specific dormitories so that

interpersonal interaction was limited to a small group of about 25.

This came as an unexpected stroke of luck to the cadets, especially the junior lot as there were no seniors breathing down their necks and there was an air of gaiety and festive cheer in the Class specific dorms not unlike that of mid-term hikes. To ensure hygiene, cadets were issued with steel glass tumblers to carry with them so as to avoid shared usage of single glass tumblers by multiple individuals. These were used individually for partaking of tea as well as for gargling. Prominent posters giving information about COVID-19 and preventive measures were proactively displayed at prominent places all around the College. The RMO also conducted awareness lectures for cadets, service personnel, staff and their families at regular intervals.

MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS

The main ward in the College hospital was treated as an isolation facility. Those cadets who were in dire need of admission for all other illnesses for being admitted in a small ward that was fumigated regularly and prepared with the highest sanitization





preparedness. Within the campus also the employees were segregated from the cadets fully. While the rest of the world was confined to their flats and houses during the national lockdown, we tried to maintain a modicum of normalcy by allowing cadets and Group C staff to use the vast expansive playgrounds for exercise, all within segregated laid down timings.

ACADEMIC ROUTINE

While the raison d'être of any school is undeniably to impart a well-rounded education, to do so in pandemic times, while complying with COVID-19 protocols laid down presented an unusual challenge. To comply with the directives of social distancing, classes were conducted outdoors in wide open spaces. It was an interesting sight to watch as classes were conducted in varied venues ranging from the open-air boxing auditorium, the Patiala Pavilion, the swimming pool and even in open lawns of the Academic Block. Since some teachers resided outside and could not commute to the College owing to the national lockdown, Sqn Ldr Shubham Mishra, the RMO and Mrs. Vandana Hamal, the Adm Offrs's better half voluntarily filled in for them and readily shouldered the additional load with a smile. To the Academic Staff's credit, the academic syllabus was completed within the laid down timelines and even the exams for the Spring Term 2020 - Terminals and Boards, were conducted efficiently and progress reports made well within time.

DESPATCH OF CADETS DURING THE TERM BREAK

Towards the end of the Spring term despatch of the cadets became another ponderous exercise in itself. Parents from nearby states, after arranging for special passes arrived at the gates on the dates given and picked up their wards. The uniqueness of our alma mater is that there is a cadet from nearly every state. The question that loomed large was as to how to despatch those cadets from far off states as the public transport system was grounded for all intents and purposes and there were no flights or trains running in the month of June. The College administration even reached out to the higher authorities to have our cadets accommodated on special military trains running towards the north east or South but somehow that could not fructify.

Undeterred and unfazed, we soon found other ways to send the cadets back home. Some parents from far away states came together and organised buses and the administration, after having calculated the loads, distances, routes, alternate routes and probable halts despatched those buses (having liberally



doused their insides in copious amounts of disinfectant) towards their intended destinations - some as far as Mumbai and Aizawl. The buses left between last week of May and first week of June, 2020.

Carefully calculated provisions in terms of water and rations calculated for the number of cadets travelling were made available for each bus so that the travelling cadets do not have to purchase them en-route. Military personnel who were posted to RIMC were placed on each bus so that they buses were not unduly stopped or harassed while crossing state borders. Last minute liaison was carried out with state authorities through which these buses had to pass and also with the parents and state authorities to which these buses were headed so that the quarantine protocols could be complied with. This indeed was an exceptional and novel experiences for the administration and we are satisfied in reporting that all

cadets reached home without incident, discomfort and most importantly infection.

RECEPTION OF CADETS AFTER THE TERM BREAK

While we rejoiced in the fact that all cadets had been despatched to their native places safely and were firmly ensconced in the secure confines of their homes, back here in the College feverish preparations went on in preparing the dorms, classes, games fields and other infrastructure in order to make it ready in time for the next term. The work that goes on to make the College to face the next term includes cleaning and sprucing-up of buildings, repair and replacement of broken furniture, cupboards, kit-boxes, doors and windows, bathroom fittings, wiring and geysers and other electrical items. All this was to be done in conjunction with the MES.

The number of items needing repair and replacement each term break is significant and the MES, moving with its archetypal speed and efficiency would never have all the infrastructure ready in time for the next term. To keep the show going, we engaged private contractors as well as carpenters, welders and masons that Rimcollian COs were generous enough to attach for the vacations. A massive planned and coordinated effort resulted in getting the infrastructure getting spruced up and ready just in time before the commencement of Autumn Term 2020.

Soon it was 15 July 2020 and time for the cadets to join back. Dorms were earmarked for isolation and cadets who joined back were segregated in batches of 5 and isolated in these dorms. Cadets segregated in these were provided with buckets and individual toiletry items with single toilets and bathrooms



earmarked for a single individual. These facilities were also inspected by the local Military Hospital authorities and we were guided as to how to segregate people and contain an outbreak if one should occur.

After the mandatory Quarantine period these cadets could join in the normal routine. After the lockdown and travel restrictions were lifted towards Aug-Sep, cadets started joining back in small batches and their joining back was coordinated in order to coordinate quarantining them in small batches of five. After the 14-day mandatory quarantine, these cadets were allowed back into normal routine. Owing to the lockdown many cadets could not join back in time for Autumn Term 2020 which commenced from 15 July 2020. In order to impart the same education to them back at their native places, online classes utilising the available Smart Classes infrastructure was resorted to. It was a unique experiment in pedagogy wherein the cadets at the College were taught through regular pedagogical practices while the classes were beamed live across the nation to the cadets' homes. It was a lesson for the Teachers too!



LEARNING EXPERIENCE

When all's said and done, the COVID-19 pandemic was, and continues to be a learning experience for us here at the College. We were initially taken unawares with the speed with which the events unfolded but we took little time to orient ourselves, align our sights on a workable, efficient plan and keep the College going - a feat that I'm convinced no other school in the country can possibly lay claim to. The multifarious protocols promulgated by the authorities and our experience in remaining locked down during the entire period gave us a heads-up as to how to function efficiently while avoiding exposure to the virus and keeping life going as close to normal as possible, which is precious learning in

itself. This calamity and the lessons learned from our initially tottering awkward and later somewhat efficient handling of it reinforces our belief that sufficiently resolute and well thought out action can surmount any curveball that is tossed our way. ■

Ich Dien

Ps. As media person I remained very active covering Covid 19 and did not come across as humongous an exercise as executed by Col Ajay Kumar and his team. Incidentally during the last Pandemic in the second decade of 20th Century, Imperial Cadets Corps (ICC) had shut down and Rajwara Camp turned into a hospital. This time the cadets continued to chirp in harmony with birds, all credit to Team RIMC - Sidharth Mishra

The Rimcollian Swag

— SIDHARTH MISHRA

Ranjit, 1979-83



From Col Shailender Arya: Met an old Rimcollian on 12 November 2020, Col Ravi Nath Maira, who is settled in Conoor and presented him the latest copy of The Rimcollian. He was in RIMC in the 1950s, remember being taught (and caught for some pranks) by Mr Hugh Catchpole, and joined the Central India Horse. In his mid-eighties now, he stays in a cottage, surrounded by books (including Camphor series) and birds, mist, monkeys, and few servants. I presented the latest Rimcollian Newsletter to him, which he was thrilled to receive, and immediately started reading it. The best school in the world, he says!



(File Picture)

I am so glad that my colleague in the editorial committee, Col Shailender Arya took out time to call on Col Ravi Nath (RN) Maira before shifting base from the Nilgiri Hills to the Raisina Hills. Col Maira has a special place in my life.

In the beginning of my career as a journalist I would go around on a scooter (Vespa NV) and my editor come to office in a Maruti Gypsy. I idolised him both for his intellect and swag and felt jealous of him for driving around a in a Gypsy. Always wanted to own one such vehicle on which I could come to office and also go out on reporting trips.

Years passed and did migrate from the scooter to a second hand Maruti 800 and then to a Maruti Zen, bought from the second-hand car bazaar of Meerut. But could never raise enough funds to buy a Gypsy.

Once on the way back from annual reunion at Dehradun, I took a lift in Col Maira's SUV -- a Mahindra Armada. Col Maira for many years was to cycle to Dehradun for the reunion and come back by the Rimcollian bus with his cycle kept on the roof. With excessive cycling he ended up injuring his hip bones, which ultimately had to be replaced. So, he

replaced his cycle with an SUV. It was such a well-kept vehicle absolutely spic and span.

I was somewhat upset that year with the developments during the reunion especially with the proposal to shut down the newsletter due to fund crunch. During the drive, Col Maira counseled me to overcome the anger and find ways and means to keep the publication going.

He said that such challenges do come once in a while and one should learn to overcome it. It gave me a new born determination to fight for my passion and with the intervention of late Major General Virendra Singh, the publication continued and is today prospering with Magazine Fund today being in surplus of Rs 30 lakh.

Having overcome the despair, I had mentioned to him about my obsession for owning a SUV. I had shared with him about my desire for reporting trips. Few month's later Col Maira called to inform that he was selling his Armada and that if I was still obsessed with the idea of owning a SUV, I could have it.

He did not put a price, and I paid peanuts for the price. I went with a friend to pick the vehicle from his

Panchshila Park in South Delhi residence. The friend, given to more practical ways of life, made a check on how full was the fuel tank. A smiling Col Maira had said that the tank of a soldier's vehicle was never half full.

A few days after buying the vehicle I drove it to New Delhi Railway station to receive my father, himself a great connoisseur of cars having driven Chevrolet in pre-1947 times and then Hindustan 10, Land Master, Ambassador, Fiat 1100 Elegant, Premier President, Maruti 800 and finally Premier Padmini. He was very happy to see my acquisition and said the seller (Col Maira) was a real well-wisher to have given me the vehicle that cheap.

For next few years I would be cynosure of many a pair of eyes as I drove down to my office on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg (Delhi's Fleet Street) in that Mahindra Armada. Since then, many a SUVs have come and gone but Col Maira's Armada gave me that swag early in my career. Incidentally I never got the ownership changed in the government records as did not have enough money to pay the huge transfer fees. So, it remained the good old soldier's vehicle. ■

RIMC - The Pride of my Career

— MR VG NENE

House Master & Vice Principal, (1965-90)



Mr VG Nene interacting with cadets in the Senior Ante Room

When I sit back and reminisce over my karma bhoomi which was RIMC, my thoughts go, as back as far back as March 1965 when I entered the portals of RIMC.

At the very outset, I was immensely impressed by the majestic architecture and the well-planned design of the institute. The academic block, cadets' living space better known as "Sections", Mess, the Commandant's Administrative Office - all the buildings designed in the Victorian Tudor style, which was unlike

any other school seen by me before. My idea of RIMC was further fortified when I saw the big lush green play grounds for field sports and the huge space dedicated to other sports like Tennis, Squash, Swimming to name a few. I knew it was a special place nestled in the lap of abundant natural beauty.

My first day at RIMC started with class V A. The cadets were very well behaved and very attentive in class. In all, I had to teach four periods every day. My impression about the cadets

was quite positive. Most of the cadets were soft spoken, were very intelligent, respectful and always well turned out.

All the teachers of the faculty were either handpicked or selected by the UPSC, New Delhi thus ensuring that teaching was of the highest standards.

The daily programme of the teachers was uniquely designed in the sense that most teachers started their day in the morning at 7.30 am and remained busy till dinner time or till lights out which was around 10 pm. I



Mr Nene with cadets of the 123rd Course : L to R - Cadet Arijit Chatterjee, Cadet Vishwajeet Kumar, Cadet Captain Kaushik Mukherjee and Cadet Sandeep Singh

incorporated this unique style into my schedule very early that proved to be an advantage in my career. The teacher remained engaged with the cadets through the entire day, academic classes, lunch/ dinner, games, evening roll call, evening preps and ending up with the night rounds in dormitories.

Teaching was carried out along scientific lines and all the lessons were well planned and audio-visual aids were integrated with the lesson plan which was duly approved by the Principal/ Commandant in advance. This practice ensured that the teaching was fruitful for students and was truly a two-way affair. Besides this, every Wednesday was dedicated to hobby classes/ time which gave the cadets an opportunity to tap their creative potential. I recollect one incident when Cadet Chiranjit Banerjee who was proficient in Rifle shooting came in handy in neutralizing a King cobra who had accidentally entered my house. I was

looking after photography and Young Newtons Club and passed some very interesting times with the cadets who came up with brilliant suggestions. A few excelled in their respective areas of interests and impressed the VIP guests during the annual Rimcollian meets.

Each term was interspersed with inter section games and debate competitions along with hiking expeditions that I so enjoyed. Going on treks with the boys was rather fun specially when we went to places like Valley of Flowers. Later, the treks turned to trips which were equally memorable. The standard of debate was quite high and RIMC cadets always made an impact in the inter school competitions. I particularly remember Cadet M Sujit and Cadet Sidharth Mishra for their debating skills and who always came up with impressive and sometimes humorous rebuttal.

When I sit back and analyse my time at RIMC I feel very fortunate and

grateful for being a member of the teaching faculty to be alongside the well-coordinated team of RIMC starting from the Commandant to the last man sitting in the Administrative office. We all worked cohesively to figure out ways that contributed in shaping the careers of the cadets and achieve their potential. I can say with no hesitation that by the end of their schooling at the RIMC, most of the cadets were enthusiastic, inspired, well-groomed young men of integrity who managed their time so well, in spite of rigorous and punishing schedules to achieve success.

I feel proud and can boastfully say that at the end of my 35 years of service at the RIMC, I've had in my class young men who have gone on to join the armed forces and the corporate world in their zeal to serve the country and a disproportionate number of them have touched the pinnacle of their chosen careers. ■

My Tryst with Destiny

—Major General Jarken Gamlin (Retd),
AVSM, SM, VSM



Maj Gen Jarken Gamlin being felicitated by Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Pema Khandu on his superannuation after a successful career in the Indian Army

I believe in destiny. Or else, how do you explain a small-town boy from Aalo in West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh get through a competitive exam for entry to the erstwhile Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College, now called the Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC), Dehradun; that too, without any guidance or preparation. Every little

detail of my trip to Shillong in the winter of 1973 to take the entrance exam is vivid in my memory. To begin with, it may sound whimsical but the truth is that the opportunity for a 'trip to Shillong' was 'the motivation' for opting to sit for the exam, not having ventured out of Aalo, ever, till then. Also, I am convinced, it was sheer providence that

the written papers - syllabus unknown - turned out to be 'friendly' and the viva-voce, about which one had no clue whatsoever, went off without a 'mishap'. I remember, when asked to explain the phenomenon of day and night, I was able to elucidate not only about day and night, but also alluded to the aspect of 'four seasons' for good measure. My lucid



Maj Gen Jarken Gamlin with his coursemate Col Prem Prakash, the former Commandant of RIMC, at a school reunion in Dehradun

explanation, using the paper weights on the interview table as models to depict the sun, the moon and the earth was well received I presume, because the interviewing officers, six in all, nodded to acknowledge my response with warm indulgent smiles. And when I confessed during the course of my interview that it was actually the prospect of a visit to Shillong, and not necessarily the urge to don the uniform, that actually prompted me to take the entrance exam, they were probably scandalised! In hindsight, I wouldn't be so stupid to make such a statement if I were to face the same interview again!

Years later, when I had the opportunity to be a board member to conduct similar interviews, many of the young candidates often reminded me of the 12-year-old 'lost case' - I mean, 'yours truly', literally burning with a

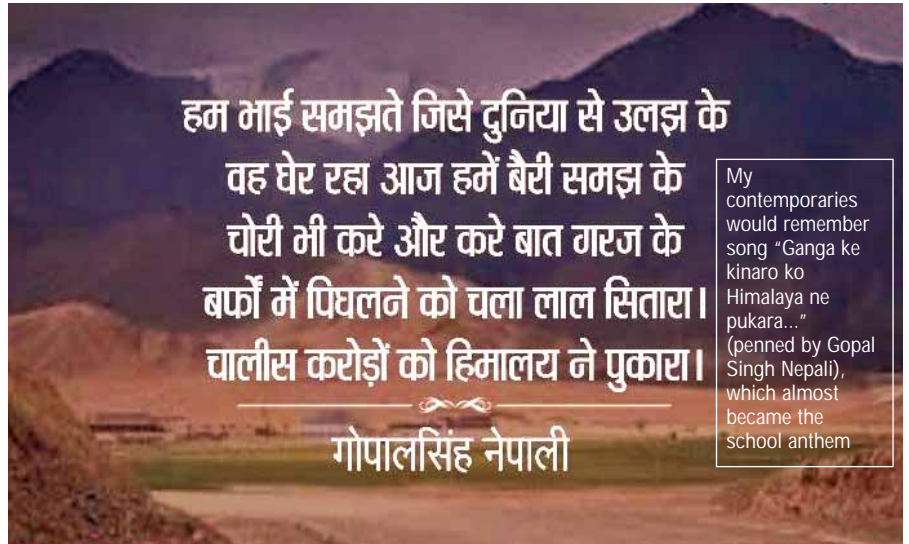
102-degree fever - yes, I had developed high fever, looking like the proverbial lamb to slaughter! Would you believe that on my return to school, I had the gumption to tell the school Principal that I would no longer be studying in Ramakrishna Mission School (RKMS) since I was headed for Dehradun shortly! Confidence personified!?! Thank God, the call letter arrived a few weeks later to announce my selection, and saved my day! And finally, my tryst with the uniform began in the spring of 1974.

My reporting to RIMC got delayed by a couple of months as I had to undergo a surgery to remove an extra toe in my right leg, which was by birth, to get medically 'fit' for selection. The arrival at RIMC was quite comical I recollect, because, for no good reason, it was rumoured that a tribal prince from

Arunachal Pradesh was joining the school. So, there was this horde of school seniors, dressed up in proper 'muftis' in school ties, waiting to receive the 'tribal prince'. Obviously, they were utterly disappointed to learn that I was just a common man! The same day there was a 'mandir' function in school which I attended, and it was but natural that the 'new arrival' became an object of extreme curiosity. Arunachal Pradesh was a new Union Territory, having got the status of an UT only in January 1972, and not surprisingly, many of the 'inquisitive' seniors weren't aware of its existence. Nothing unusual. 'coz even during my NDA days in later years, I often got spared from the central 'fall-ins' and punishments because some of the Sergeants on 'the prow' thought Arunachal Pradesh was a foreign country!

In the 'mandir', I remember the cadets singing 'bhajans' with such devotion and gay abandon, eyes closed in ardent reverence (!!) that it gave me a brief insight into the 'musical discrepancies' inherent amongst most of the participants! Mind you, these were my 'first impressions' and so, not necessarily accurate! At the end of the function, the prevailing hierarchical structure in the school also became evident to a newcomer like me since the seniors could be seen 'sauntering' while the junior lot had to 'march' back. Fortunately, I was spared the 'march' that day, perhaps, to offer me an illusion of leniency, as a starter! But this hierarchical structure, I firmly believe, is the bulwark of our organisation and there can be no better way to instil a sense of discipline and imbibe implicit obedience amongst a motley group of young individuals hailing from different parts of the country. That evening, I also learnt that it was imperative to 'lock' my cupboard or else. (!!) and this, came as a surprise because we had no 'locks' in my previous hostel at RKMS, Aalo.

In fact, it is hard to believe, but there was no 'lock' system at our homes in Aalo those days. Overall, the school campus was an absolute 'five-star' as compared to the austere environ of the 'Mission' school. The majestic buildings, in the midst of sprawling lawns and by lanes lined with colourful flowers and the vast expanse of playfields, appeared surreal to me almost like a picture from the calendars one had seen. Sadly, my 'first meal' was a disaster because the concept of 'knife and fork' was alien to me, and I am eternally grateful to those seniors in Pratap Section who had the patience to teach me the nuances of dining on a table. I also remember the entire college rising from their chairs, in unison, moment the Cadet Captain 'dragged back his chair' noisily, to get up, at the end of the dinner; didn't know until much later in time that this 'dragging' was a deliberate act to elicit an immediate response. Finally, at the end of a hectic 'first' day in school, it was when I actually hit the sack that I felt the first



My contemporaries would remember song "Ganga ke kinaro ko Himalaya ne pukara..." (penned by Gopal Singh Nepali), which almost became the school anthem

tinge of homesickness and cried myself to sleep that night. Although in the consequent days I quickly learnt to adapt to the new environment and made friends with my 'dorm' and 'class' mates, but somehow, for no known reason, the hooting of school siren used to trigger a feeling of melancholy in me. Wonder if it was linked to the timings of the hoots? It remains a mystery.

Being from a rural background the 'spoken' language of English was foreign to me then. So, people were mighty amused that a tribal boy from some god-forsaken leech-infested jungles of the north-east could speak fluent Hindi. Little did they know that this 'Mowgli' had finished reading the eight volumes of 'Mansarovar' by Munshi Prem Chand in the school library at RKMS, Aalo prior his selection to RIMC; thanks to a selfless, dedicated and motivated teacher like 'Gupta sir', the 'achkan' wearing 'speco' Hindi teacher from Lucknow, who imbibed in us not only the habit of reading but the love for the language as well. Some of you may recollect, how, when late Mr K Kumar announced my name as the book-prize winner for Higher Hindi during one of the end-of-the-term functions, there was a 'pin drop silence' until Mr Kumar announced to clarify that it was indeed for 'Higher' and not 'Lower' Hindi, as was, presumably, being presumed! No gainsaying that the applause that followed still reverberates in my ears.

To my peers and seniors in RIMC, the Hindi songs I sang to prove my 'nationality', as I understand, were a revelation too! My contemporaries in school would surely remember the song "Ganga ke kinaro ko Himalaya ne pukara..." (penned by famed Hindi poet Gopal Singh Nepali), which almost became the school anthem and won laurels galore in group singing competitions in Dehradun. Frankly, at some point in time, I also got fed up of singing this song over and over again, though the song did gain a lot of popularity and became a 'hit' amongst the musically inclined seniors and teachers, and as a result, I had little trouble in settling down to life as a cadet. Here, I would like to mention that I have deliberately refrained from mentioning names of friends, seniors and teachers in the write-up lest I miss out a name or two - after all, I am writing this from 'memory' which I don't trust anymore (!!) - and, inadvertently, hurt someone's feelings. As they say, discretion is the better part of valour!

In retrospect and as a summation of my life ideas, I truly believe in destiny, and that, my initial ashram-like environmental upbringing at RKMS, Aalo followed by a well-rounded curriculum in the hallowed portals of RIMC, Dehradun during my formative years stood me in good stead and continued to inspire and shape my roller-coaster journey in the 'olive green' - that's 'Army' for the uninitiated! ■

Another of Those 'SIR I AM A RIMCOLLIAN' Tale

—Lt Gen NS Brar (Retired)
Shivaji 1961-65



Reading the piece by General SK Singh in the September 2020 issue of *The Rimcollian* triggered recall of some related incidents. Though many came to mind, two diametrically opposed incidents merit recounting.

In the early sixties, perhaps 1963, one of my uncles was the Brigadier in Charge Administration of 15 Corps where Lt Gen Bikram Singh was the Corps Commander. My uncle would narrate some Rimcollian incident whenever I met him. This one was that of a Major who was accused of some wrongdoing and was marched up to the Corps Commander for the formal reading of charges against him and order further action. Given the nature of the offence and the General's reputation as a tough commander, a General Court Martial was more or less a foregone conclusion. After being duly marched in, the charge sheet was read out and the formal question 'Do you have anything to say?' was put to the officer. Standing ramrod straight and with a poker face he said 'Yes Sir, I am a Rimcollian...' The General was silent for a few seconds and then the dam burst - 'Then why the hell are you here for these charges, not expected from a Rimcollian, disgrace to the alma mater' and so on.... And finally ...'Get out from here'. That was the end of the matter.

Half a century later, as a member of the Armed Forces Tribunal, Chandigarh Bench, while hearing cases, one pertaining to an Air Force officer came up. It was the narrow bureaucratic interpretation by the authorities denying him his dues. The petition was allowed and being one among the many, I forgot about it. A few weeks later at a gathering a gentleman walked up to me and



Lt Gen Bikram Singh, Commander, XV Corp, 1962-63

thanked me for deciding his case favourably. I could not recall the details and left it at that. And then he said to me 'Sir, I am a Rimcollian'. Of course, he had not let it be known when his case was being heard.

Post Script: Lt Gen Bikram Singh, GOC, XV Corps held in the highest esteem for his record in defending Ladakh and Chushul died when an Alouette (also called the HAL Cheetah) helicopter of the Indian Army crashed on 22 Nov 1963 near Poonch city in the 2.5 Km radius of ceasefire line, which also had onboard Lt Gen Daulat Singh GOC-in-C of Western Command, Air Vice Marshall E W Pinto Air Officer Commanding of Western Air Command, Maj Gen KND Nanavati, GOC 25 Infantry Division, Brig S R Oberoi Commander of 93 Brigade and Flt Lt S S Sodhi. all were killed in the crash.

He is considered the bravest and most efficient General of the Indian Army. A roundabout of Jammu city has been dedicated to his memory. Known as Bikram Chowk it is the biggest roundabout in Jammu city. A statue has also been erected in the middle of the roundabout. This photo of Lt-General Bikram Singh is scanned from a Newspaper.

In Poonch City there is a Shahid Samarak (memorial monument) on the bank of the Drungli river where the General's helicopter crashed. The memorial was constructed by 10 Brigade and all the units of 25 Inf Division in 1980. After his death his native village of Siana near Jalandhar in Punjab was renamed Siana Bikram Singh. The Helipad at the Headquarters of Northern Command in Udhampur has been named Bikram Helipad. ■

Lessons From My Siachen Glacier Tenure

—Lt Gen Aniruddha Chakravarty (Retd)
Pratap 1968-72



Given below is an article titled 'This too, shall pass', written by me in end- March 2020. It was published in the Delhi edition of 'The Pioneer' on 01 April, 2020. The backdrop was initial stages of COVID imposed lockdowns in India, and I did sense a feeling of concern amongst people, in facing the challenging situation brought about by COVID, especially the lockdown. My article was an effort to encourage people at large to face the circumstances boldly, and I related it to my period of time in the Siachen Glacier.

If you go through the article, you would comprehend that the Glacier tenure was indeed a very challenging one. Leadership qualities, comradeship, esprit-de- corps and many other qualities were being put to an ultimate test, brought about by the weather and the enemy. And, I would like to state that it was my training and upbringing in RIMC, which contributed significantly in developing these leadership qualities. The discipline, spirit of comradeship and all other facets in RIMC, which all Rimcollians are fully aware of, brought about a feeling in oneself that "you can do it", whatever the challenge be. I suppose it's not only me, but our entire class of '68 have similar feelings and have displayed them in various occasions, whenever needed.

Sometimes one wonders whether it is even real or has a Robin Cook medical thriller come to life? What used to be in the pages of a novel has now become a part of our lives, with medical teams walking around in protective suits, huge isolation wards covered in miles of plastic, people dying



in huge numbers, sanitizers being sprayed everywhere. It's like a bad dream. And what of the economic impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on the world? Suddenly, there are no flights, trains or buses.

The malls and market places are closed, so are other places of entertainment. It is the same story with educational institutions and amid the nationwide lockdown all one can see are deserted roads and service lanes, social distancing and the accompanying silence. Though these are necessary measures to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Ultimately, at the personal level, it means one thing and that is isolation.

The present situation takes me back to the year 1992. I was a young Major, just out from the Defence Services Staff College and instead of going on a staff appointment as is generally the policy

after the course, I went back to my battalion, as it was going for a tenure in the Siachen glacier. I was to command a Company in the glacier in one of the most challenging picquets. The altitude was around 19,000 ft and recorded temperature around minus 45°C, with a wind chill effect going to around minus 65°C. The picquet was on top of an ice wall, and due to various factors, it was impossible for helicopters to come there. This, therefore, led to a big challenge, that of getting our daily survival rations from the closest helipad.

It was the month of February and a few days after taking over from the relieving Unit, the weather packed up. Once the weather packs up there, it's a completely white-out condition. Visibility becomes so limited that if you stretch your hand, you can't see your fingers! The snow blizzards are so strong that if you are not well grounded, you

can just be blown off. Under such conditions, movement means certain death. Therefore, it's total isolation.

The challenge was further accentuated because the packed weather conditions continued for a long period, nearly 45 days! With no movement possible, rations started diminishing steadily and I had to severely restrict our meals so that we could last longer. We came down to one meal a day which consisted of only 1 or 2 tablespoons of rice and nothing else!

Our survival depended entirely on kerosene oil because, not only was it required for cooking, we needed it most for melting blue ice into water, without which we would have got completely dehydrated. The stock of kerosene oil and other items were at a critical stage which would last only a few days, even with rationing. And nobody could predict when the weather would clear up.

At this stage, another tragedy befell us, when one of our colleagues, a Sepoy, attained martyrdom, falling to one of the extreme high-altitude complications. With the weather still packed, we could not even send his mortal remains down to the Base Camp. Hence, his remains were kept with us in our tent.

Now, you can imagine the situation - blizzard outside, no movement possible, rations down to a bare minimum, the mortal remains of our colleague with us in the tent and most importantly, we were completely cut-off not only from the battalion at Base Camp but also from our families and loved ones. Those days, we had no mobile phones or SAT phones to stay connected with our families. We knew that if anything happened to us, nobody could help because it was just not physically possible. And we still had about two months more of our scheduled tenure to complete. We, therefore, had to be at our mental and physical best.

Can there be any greater form of isolation than what we went through in 1992? However, we overcame all challenges and came out successful. At the end of our tenure, my men and I de-inducted without another casualty.

So, what kept us going? As I look back, first, it was our will to overcome all

challenges. We knew the gravity of the situation but never let it affect us adversely. It only strengthened our will-power and our camaraderie grew as our difficulties increased.

Second, our strong belief that our organization was firmly with us. I used to talk to my Commanding Officer once a day (who was in the Battalion HQ at the Base) and we both knew that, physically, it was impossible to help us in that situation. But his reassurances were enough for me and my boys to know that whenever it would be possible, they would do anything to help us.

Third, was planning for the eventuality. Though I never expected the situation to turn out the way it did, I did expect disruptions due to the weather. Accordingly, we had prepared mentally and I had controlled the rations. It was because of this planning that we could last out with our 'one-tablespoon rice meal a day'.

Fourthly, resolute leadership. Personal example had to be set by doing exactly what everyone else was expected to do, including having the same rations, irrespective of rank. Also, such extreme conditions needed certain precautions, otherwise, within hours one could lose a limb or one's life. One such example was that after you went out (even to relieve yourself, even if for a few seconds), it was mandatory to wash your feet in warm water on coming back. Not doing so would result in frost-bite. I observed the initial signs of frost-bite on one soldier who was not adhering to the directions. When I noticed his lackadaisical attitude on the second day, I had to literally kick him. It saved his limb and life.

Lastly, one had to find inner peace. Once a day we would collectively pray and sing bhajans - out of tune, rustic, but from the heart. My lifeline was my Walkman and a cassette of Anup Jalota's bhajans. The batteries of the Walkman were the most precious and I used to keep them in the inner pocket of my down-feather jacket which we used to wear 24x7. The body temperature kept the batteries alive, otherwise within hours they would have got discharged in such weather conditions. There is one

thing I still have to do - to thank Anup Jalota for my life!

All the soldiers of my Company have since retired but even now, these brave soldiers enquire about my welfare over a phone call and that makes my day!

Old soldiers are supposed to 'Fade Away'. I was happy doing that after retirement -participating in some voluntary events and diligently listening to my wife! However, today, the country is facing an extraordinary situation and I thought I must share my story with my countrymen and women, especially in relation to isolation.

All the factors that made us come out successful from our tenure in the glacier, exist in our country today. Our strong will-power which we have displayed many times under different circumstances and during wars, exemplary leadership and organizing capability of our country and deep spiritual understanding, irrespective of whichever religion or faith we follow.

The isolation that we will face now is much simpler as compared to what we experienced in the glacier. Today, with so many facilities available, this is an opportunity to spend quality time with family, to read, to catch up on various hobbies, to contemplate and to meditate. We also need to care about those affected by the virus and their families, within the permitted rules. We need not hug them physically but can show them our sympathy in any feasible manner so that we can share their trauma.

As I understand, the challenge is not going to end soon and, therefore, we have to bank entirely on our capabilities to see us through - our example will be followed by the world.

As the situation improves, which, with our engaged commitment I'm certain it will, we of course need to look inwards. There could be many, but I would like to focus on two aspects - first, nature versus virtual world and second, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed."

Does that sound familiar?

It's going to be a longish battle....and we will win. ■

The 1984 Reunion Diaries

—Lt Gen PN Anathanarayanan
1975-79, Chandragupta



From the diary of Maj Gen PN Anathanarayanan, popularly known as Peru among the Rimcollians. He wrote this narration as a Gentleman Cadet in IMA while attending the March 1984 Reunion at the RIMC.

10 March 1984. Time 1520 hrs. I put on my games rig and cycled down to Pope's cabin only to hear Punia telling me that the RIMC platoon has left for RIMC. I turned back. Met my Platoon Commander on the way. Requested him for special liberty and was granted. Changed over to Muftis and pushed off alone. Chandragupta section deserted. Moved on to the open-air theatre.

Time 1610 hrs. Was amidst the Rimcos, two bouts were already over. Met Pope, Pinky, Chajju and R.D there. Chandus were doing well. Was on top of the world. Pratap also was doing well. The 10th bout (approx) was between a Chandu and a Pratapian. The Chandu was the favourite to win. Rather odds on favourite. Was rather shocked to hear the decision going against him. With disgust writ all over my face I went to Pope & told him that It was an unfair decision. Felt that Old man Gumman Gullu had pulled a fast one (An ace up his sleeve sort of thing). The bouts turned out to be really good. My thoughts raced back to the good old days when we were cadets and witnessing boxers like Meitei Vs Biswas, Surdip Chand, Venky, Boldy, GRS Bisht and of course the historic bout between Manjul & Pathak. The higher weight boxers exhibited lot of grit & power. Came back with the satisfaction that the standards were being maintained. Shivaji could get only two boxers through to the finals. (The absence of Chor perhaps) Ranjit had five, Chandus

six and Pratap eight. I also did my bit as a member of the cheering party. Once the bouts got over, we decided to meet the AO regarding our presence for the 12th & 13th. Wasn't very impressed by him. He had sent a letter to Maj Malhotra to work on the matter. Pope informed him of Malhotra's absence back at the IMA as he was already posted out. Less said of this the better. I suppose It was decided that Pope & Pinky would go over to Deb's place and request him to do the needful. Had dinner with the Chandus. Even I was offered Bournvita for my cheering! All of us went off to our respective sections. I trudged along to the section room along with the Chandus. On our way, I halted at the Shivaji Section Commander's room just to tell him to take things easy and that losing wasn't the end of the world. Poor chap was feeling damn bad about his defeat as well as the performance of his section in general. Once inside the section room, I started narrating stories of those good old days, the havoc we caused, the chaos we created etc to a group of ardent listeners. (At least they were seeming to be), when Pope leading his troop came to pick me up on their way out. Was back in my room at 10 PM.

11 March 1984. Was off on a picnic (platoon) to Sahastradhara. Returned at 5.45 PM went over to Pope's place to find out as to what had happened and what was our POA (Plan of Action). We

were free to go on the 12th afternoon and once we get there we would be told about our programme for the 13th so I slept, happy & contented.

12 March 1984. The D day had come. Our 6th & 7th periods were an LDM on LMG fixed line. This was followed by rolling in River Tons. Were left only at 2 PM. My Course was called in front of AQ's office for AST Confirmation. I got my Q&A paper. Time was running out. Ran to the mess and had lunch, ran back, saw my tactics paper. Picked up my cycle & scrambled to my room. It was already 2.45 PM. Changed into Muftis. Called Virk, & tried to get a camera when Mehta and Panghal landed up. The time now was 3.05 PM. Couldn't get a camera as the flash was non-functional. Now we made a beeline for RIMC keeping in mind the hockey match. At 3.25 PM we were inside Chandragupta section room, quickly changed over to games rig and reached the pavilion. Who else but Capt Deb greeted us. He had promised to take care of us once back at the Academy for landing up late! The hockey match started off. Lanniyo & an old boy Sander were the referees. I played as a left half. Chow-(goalkeeper), Sudhi, Panghal, RIS Mehta, Prem Prakash, Capt Manchanda, Maj Gen (GOC UP Area) etc were the other members. Not to forget the star player Deb. We were a bit too good for the Rimcos. P Deb slammed in two goals. He received at

least a dozen passes to score, but being Deb, could convert only two! The match ended up in a 3-1 victory for the Old Boys. Often thought of the year 1979 month of Mar, the 17th day of the month, When I was a member of the College hockey team and we managed a 1-0 victory over the Old Boys with Mehta getting the match winner. Once the match got over, we adjourned for tea. Met Sabarwal, Arun Anand etc. Chow was a changed man. With grey hair he did resemble a ret'd Air Comdr. Hopefully he should take off from where Air Commodore Nayyer had left us. We really miss him & his antics. Awesome Chow would do a wonderful job of his new assignment. Hardly any snacks served during tea. Could manage only a sandwich & a cup of tea. Slowly drifted off to the section. Had a bath (cold water), changed & made a dash for the much-awaited boxing finals. The first two bouts featured Chandus and both the small gritty Chandus won their bouts. Sameer, Panghal, Mehta, Romeo & myself were sitting along with the Chandus and cheering our guts out. In between did offer our sympathies to Shivaji as they had to wait for quite some time to exercise their vocal chords. Witnessed some excellent bouts. All were well contested. Of all the persons met Sunil Kapoor (would prefer to call him Kapoor coin of the good old days) looks the same except for the fag he had on his mouth. During the tea break, I managed to salvage a lone pastry & a cup of coffee! Would attribute this solely to Pinky. He was more interested in showing off Sonia & her reaction towards him to me. I was the sufferer as I had to literally barge in and salvage a cup of coffee. Thanks to Biloo I got a pastry. Once the bouts got over, Prizes distributed, we moved on for dinner, Sudhi wanted to have packed dinner along with the cadets as he wanted to go back to the Academy to study for WT AST.

As far as I was concerned, ASTs keep happening, but Rimcollians happen just once a year. So we moved on to the Mess. Initially we, the GCs,

were standing together in the Junior Ante Room (Incidentally that's where the bar was!) Mrs Sinha came over to speak to us. When she saw us eyeing the drinks with curious eyes, she told us good bye and left as free for the assault on to our objective (THE BAR). As GCs we were supposed to have only beer. We did adhere to this condition imposed on us. But a Rimco is a Rimco and he does know how to manage the stuff he wants. Very soon Old Boys were having pegs of Whiskey exchanged for beer! The Middle Ante Room was reverberating with music. (An 444 ASC band). AO in order to ensure that we gulped down the hard liquor slowly, guided us to the Middle Ante Room and told us to start off dancing. He thought we had fallen for the bait as quite a few of us entered the dancing area. Some of us were fortunate enough to find a partner but the rest of us continued dancing to the tune. We did make frequent visits to the bar in between! As a result quite a few of us were pretty high & sozzled. I had the PRIVILEGE of dancing with an old Aunty! The ladies moved out for dinner. Chow got us together and got the band to play Bombay se aya mera dost. We literally went wild (only men). Those AEC blokes also joined us. We freaked out. Burst all the balloons that were around, and in between the GCs were supplying cold drinks to the cadets. Pope landed up with a fight (only verbal!) regarding packed dinner for cadets with AO & Commandant. The rest of us weren't in a position to fight! we moved in for dinner at around 12 midnight. Only to find Muchad, totally sizzled, having a go at Deb. Shivi was also pretty zonked. Deb was trying his best to wriggle out of Muchhad's drunken net and ultimately succeeded (with Pope's help!). I was also feeling pretty high. Gulped down some dinner, had my share of pudding only to find Manchanda drop his plate of pudding down and jump back and start yelling that it wasn't his fault. Quite a few old boys put their hands on our shoulders and yapped away to glory with us. Left the mess at 11.45pm and went straight

to section. Enroute in Shivaji section, I found Muchhad continuing with his antics. The Shivajians were having their share of fun. Reached Chandragupta section and the sight I saw made even a drunken clown like me burst out laughing. Mehta sprawled in the lawn, pushing away Romeo lying face down on the grass, getting up quite frequently to puke... R.D. lying on the right flower bed (near the steps) and a bucket of water & mug besides Romeo & Mehta. A few cadets were desperately trying to get them to their senses by pouring some water on their heads. This operation was being carried out under the supervision of Sameer, who himself looked a pretty worried man. I made a trip on cycle to Pratap to check up with Pope. On the way I dropped in at Shivaji to see Muchhad standing outside wrapped in a towel, puking away. After sometime he moved into Junior dorm and started dancing.

He took off his towel and all the guys did have a hearty laugh. Meanwhile Pinky and MB were entertaining the seniors in Senior Dorm. Went over to Pope only to see Thapa puking away and Negi promising never to drink again. I told Pope that we were making a move & they were to follow (This was what Sameer wanted me to do). On my way back, once inside Shivaji section I cannot exactly figure out the number of beds I must have run over before I made it to the door. When I reached my section, I found that the three mentioned earlier were now lying down in beds and were not in a position to move for at least for ½ an hour or so. So once again I made a trip to Pratap to inform Pope that they were to pick us up on their way out and I returned to Chandragupta. Panghal was talking to some guys in junior dorm. The rest of the GC gang were sleeping in the section room and poor old Sameer was sitting on a dressing stool, breaking his head. "Jumkey put up ker dega." "Jumkey yeh Kerega, Jumkey will fire me." I promised him that Pope will take care of Jumkey and took him over to Junior dorm to join in the conversation. Those guys showed on a scrap book all

the naughty pictures made by Mahadeo which was being passed on and which was to be mentioned as National property. Heard some rumblings in the section room. It turned out to be Mehta puking in a bucket. I am sure the Chandraguptians had their fill of laughter at us. At 12.15 AM Pope lands up along with Bobo, Pinky and slow motion (Virk). Muchad & Shivi decided to stay back. (Rather the decision to leave them behind was taken by us). Pretty zonked they were! Mehta refused to be woken up. So he also was left behind. Romeo was literally pulled out of his bed (Thanks to Jeremy!). R.D was also dragged out of his bed and put on his cycle. The most relieved person happened to be Sameer. The first thing he asked Pope to do was to talk to his favourite Jumkey and with a bit of reissuance he was fine. Panghal's cycle had a flat. Probably it was drunk too! So Nehra (Chajju) decided to give Romeo a ride back. Panghal rode Romeo's bike. Pope flexed his muscles a bit and got Romeo seated on Chajju's cycle. R.D was forced to mount on his seat. We all picked up our bikes & then bidding good night rather good morning to the Rimcos we moved off. The first hurdle was the swimming pool gate.

Fortunately it was open. Chill wind was hitting us on our face. Felt pleasant, turned right and reached the FRI gate. As our luck would have it, it was closed. The sober guys carried out a recce. But there was no way in. Someone amongst us wanted to go through Ballapur. But the majority, determined (zonked) as we were, decided to scale the gate and mind you scaling a height with all except Pope & Chajhu who were not drunk & Virk ½ sober (He did take a lot of time to react to the odd glass of beer he had gulped down!) was an achievement by itself. I, feeling a bit wonky jumped over to the other side. Virk and Pope stood on either side of the gate and started getting the cycles over which wasn't much of a problem.

I was finding it damn funny that whenever I put a cycle on its stand it used to fall off! I kept making attempts

to make it stand. At the same time I had to pull up all my reserves to keep myself on my feet! The cycles crossed over. Now the problem was to get the guys over. Romeo decided that he with his wide experience of scaling a lot of mountains, he would make an attempt at this one. "Hamne to bahut pahar chadh hai, ye bhi chadh lenge: Badraj bhi chadna hai". Once he got up on the cemented portion he found the railings too tall for him! Pope guided him over the wall. We all be then had burst out laughing and these were Romeo's exact wonder "Ismail you're laughing a bit too much. Haso Haso mai aur hansata hu." So operation Romeo successful. Now the other operation was getting R.D over. Wasn't much of a problem. Being a light weight, MB & Motion (Virk) got him on top of the wall & then pope took care of his safe landing. Once all were on the other side of the wall we decided to move. Romeo summoned his driver Chajhu and ordered him to get his Mercedes. He then mounted on it & shouted "Chalo Chalo"! R.D reminded me of one of the English movies I had seen in which they place a dead man on a horse and let it gallop off. He was literally lying down on his cycle. This way, we decided it wouldn't be long before he would find himself on the lap of Mother earth! The rest had moved on. Only Virk, Bobo, R.D & me were left behind. Virk decided to carry R.D's bike & Bobo decided to carry him. We thus reached the gate to find the rest who had gone ahead waiting for us. Romeo & Panghal had already made a move and I followed them. We had bid good bye by then. I parked my armoured car on the corridor and decided to look up Romeo along with Virk. Well Romeo entered his room, switched on all the lights and here's what transpired between him and his room-mate.

Romeo to roommate. You know I have my WT exam tomorrow. So Roommate who was a 3rd termer DE was pretty shocked and stunned on seeing Romeo in this shape, summoned his wits and replied "It's already early morning now (the time then was 2

AM). Romeo retorted - "I'm pissed out to study now, so set the alarm and wake me up okay!" Then off he went to sleep. I entered my room, switched on the light only to find my roommate, a Jat, giving me one of those lost looks. I burst out laughing. That probably frightened him. He put the blanket over his head and relieved me of these lost looks. It was around 2.30 AM before I hit the bed. Meanwhile Pope managed to reach Singarh along with Chajhu & R.D. He prepared black coffee for R.D and all of them fell asleep by 2.45 AM or so. So 12th of March ultimately came to a glorious end.

13 March 1984. The D- DAY. 0600hrs. That Jat of a roommate of mine had to wake me up at 0600hrs. Cursed him and then got out of bed. Went over to my JUO. He told me to fill in the mid-term leave certificate. When he found my hands wobbling he decided to fill it up himself. I also let him know that Romeo would be in no position to fill his leave certificate. Meanwhile Romeo got out of his bed and started moving towards the door. When his roommate questioned him about where he was going, he replied "To the bathroom". I returned to my cabin and got down to completing my early morning chores. I felt damn light in my top storey. I let myself loose and brushed & shaved dancing in the bathroom. Once I did that I decided to do some sort of studying for my WT paper. Nothing seemed to enter my wonky nut. I was sitting on my chair and laughing at all that had happened. My roommate entered after the first period & I am sure he was pretty careful not to question me. Romeo landed up and we decided to do some studying together. We found nothing entering our nuts. So we got down to a bit of dancing! (No music!) I decided to have a bath to cool my nut off. I must have spent at least ½ an hour or so in the bathroom I was splashing my hands in the bucket. I opened the tap and was trying to clap with the flow of water between my palms. I also tossed up the mug and turned around and tried to kick it.

Unfortunately for me it landed up on my nut! (“My name is Nobody” prompted me do so). Both of us took off for breakfast, feeling light and happy. After breakfast it was time to move to the WT area. The paper was given to us at 0930hrs. At 0938hrs I got up, submitted my paper, told Maj D.J Singh & pushed off. Reached my room. Changed over into muftis, picked up my white trouser and made a dash for “My home”. At 1005hrs I reached my section changed over to cricketing rig and ran to the pavilion. Was just in time as my name was entered as an opening batsman. Dhillion & myself opened, the ball was rising like hell. I made four runs and then returned to the pavilion. Maj Manchanda, P. Deb & Sudhi did their bit with the bat and we landed up scoring 87 runs in 18 overs. The cadets succumbed to the hostile bowling of Sudhi & P. Deb and they were bundled out for 67 runs. So once again the “Old boys” had won. Returned to the pavilion and I gulped down a large gin & followed it by beer. Mr Catchpole gave the Cup to the Old Boys team Captain. I filled it up with beer and all the team members gulped down “The victory drink”. We then moved towards the Mess. I immediately got down to business. I filled up my plate and headed towards Chandragupta section table & yakked around. Guys wanted ice cream & I managed two plates for them! (I myself gobbled up two slabs). Pope landed up pretty late. Fortunately he did manage grub. Amitabh Dutt pulled me away for Squash. Bullied two juniors playing in the new Squash court.

Played three games with him. Was racing two balls all the time (The gin and beer I suppose). Fell down at least 11 times. The court was slipping & I also was slipping. I forgot to mention about an incident at the pavilion.. \ Pinky was thrilled to see Sonia turning up for the match. He had Deb’s Scooter Keys. But Deb had come in Sinha’s car. So anyway, he was doing all that he could to attract her attention. After some time they moved out. So poor Pinky! Bad Luck!). I felt 3 games of

Squash was enough. I jumped into a bed vacated by Mehta who was leaving for Jammu & dozed off only to be woken up by Pope at around 4 PM. Woke up finally at 5 PM & decided to move for tea. Did Dhava on the section eats, had tea by the cups & returned a happy person. Spent some time fooling around and had a bath, changed and moved over to the Convocation Hall. Lt Gen Candeth was just completing his speech. The play commenced. Took the camera from Pope & went around clicking Steve who was acting in the play. One can very well imagine, a few cadets dressed up as females and acting. All of them turned up having hoarse voices & it did seem strange. Imagine Chajjuu junior acting as an old man! The music part which followed the play was pretty good. Chow on public demand went over to the stage & sang “Hotel California” as a Jat would sing it. Was the highlight of the evening. Coffee awaited us outside, wasn’t of much interest to us. Except of course for Batty (Pinky) who was desperately trying to impress Sonia! Our next destination was the Mess (the Bar to be more precise). Today we weren’t going to be stopped. Started off on whisky. Made frequent visits to the quadrangle supplying the cadets soft drinks & beer. When I returned from one of my visits I found that all the Old Boys had moved on for dinner. Old man Bobo was out! He was front-rolling, back-rolling etc on the floor. I decided to move to the Mess. I felt rather great with a camera hanging round my neck. I was pretty amazed to see all the Old Boys squatting on their chairs as if Dinner Night was on. So I decided to click the centre table. On my way I was confronted by the AO who asked me to get out at once. I was semi zonked. So I just walked out. I feel I should thank AO for this gesture of his for I had more fun outside. I entered the Junior Ante Room to find Bobo totally zonked surrounded by a group of cadets. Virk was also high (on beer!). I too joined them. Outside Capt Gurung on the guitar and Sudhi crooning away were entertaining the cadets. Lanniyo ended up sitting on

Romeo’s leg!!! They shifted to the Junior Ante Room. Then it was Romeo & Sudhi vocals singing and Gurung on the guitar & we on the floor (dancing!). Well, then we moved on to the quadrangle where Chow was entertaining the cadets, The Nayyer style. Well, just before this I made Romeo stand amidst the Kanchas near the bar and I clicked them! Then we moved for dinner (Virk, Romeo & me).

Biloo landed up (pissed out) serving us chicken, pudding & what have you. Sinha (smally) also turned up inside telling us that Chow wanted me. Chow had challenged the Rimcos for a dancing competition. Negi was the Rimcos rep & Chow the captain of the Old Boys. The “Diamond Cutters” provided the music (mostly Lanniya ka dish!) Well. Negi was defeated outright leaving Chow the uncrowned king. Chow then started off with Tragedy! He sings this literally crying! His voice gave way & then he gave a repeat performance of “Hotel California” the Jat style. He then got down to jokes when I landed up. Both of us got down to singing “I married a female wrestler” (The song for which I won a bucket as a prize in my class!). This was followed by “If I were a little boy and if I were to marry!) All masters and their daughters were the victims and from nowhere Lanniyo landed up. We were forcing him to sing when he pointed towards “Unty” who was standing outside the Quadrangle. Chivalrous as we were, Chow & myself invited her. She agreed (much to our discomfort). Anyway she sung a few lines & Lanniyo took off with his Shers!! By then we too decided to break off with “Three cheers to RIMC.” I had told Chow to land up in Chandragupta as I was organising a pillow fight. I wanted to fly. My legs were bit wobbly. I needed quite an amount of space to move. I walked into Chandragupta junior dorm to see quite a few awake and I challenged them for a pillow fight. The guys who were sleeping sprang out of their beds with a pillow in their hands & then the battle royale commenced. No one knew who was fighting whom. I was surrounded by a gang of small guys and I did take a lot

of bashing. Just then Chow along with his brother, Pope, Negi, Thapa etc. turned up there. Then it became a Pratap vs Chandragupta fight. With each bang I got on my nut I was seeing stars! Chow was the referee. He called for a ceasefire & we accepted it. Then the whole gang made our way to Shivaji. We were all in a daze and we moved towards Shivaji "Junior dorm" as Chow was leading! Challenged them for a battle. It was accepted & then all hell was let loose. All I can remember is Chow entering the arena with a peace sign. Our next target was Ranjit. Junior dorm was overwhelmed pretty soon. Middle dorm also didn't provide much of resistance. From nowhere turned up Virk rallying the entire section behind him. After intense fighting we decided to move back. We were being followed by the Ranjities. The majority of our army was inside Ranjit. Only the Head Quarters element was moving back. When Virk challenged us, the Commander in Chief, Field Marshal Chow appointed me to tackle him. So I entered the battlefield. All I can remember was that Virk was in his Kachhas & barefoot and I was dressed up in shirt & tie (tie just knotted around my neck). I was getting bashed up when some faithful pillow fighters came to my rescue.

Anyway we entered Pratap & told them that Ranjit was advancing and so they all trooped out with their pillows & pushed back the advance successfully. The HQ element consisting of Chow as the C-in-C & me as his 2IC. (No designation for Pope & Chow's brother for they didn't fulfill the basic qualification of being passed out!!!) was seated on the stairs ahead of Pratap Section Junior dorm kitroom and tactically analysing the battle situation. All of a sudden we saw a small pillow warrior running towards us. Once it was identified that he was a friend, not a foe, we asked him what the situation was in the front. He immediately came to attention and said that Ranjit was pushed back completely from the no man's land (The Quadrangle) into their territory & his Commander in the front was ordering his man to fall back. Well,

this didn't suit our plans. A quick decision was made. We ordered the young warrior to inform the Commander in the front to carry out final assault on to the objective. Then as contented warriors - rather veterans - we moved on to Chota part. Chow felt crappy as the battle had its effects on him or rather it was the after effects of a mighty pillow war, and then headed towards the bogs to bomb Karachi!! Pope & myself headed for Chandragupta. Most of the guys had fallen asleep (It was around 2 AM). Only the senior dorm was awake. The section room had Romeo, Sameer, Panghall, Uniyal and Sikander snoring away. Pope & me were sitting around Chote Mathu's (Sinha's) bed and yakking away, when Dutt & Bisan burst a number of crackers inside the section room. But they got pretty disgusted when the guys sleeping there refused to even raise an eyelid! So off they went to sleep. Me also decided that it was time for us to make a move. Bid good night to all awake & returned to Chota part via middle dorm kit room & junior dorm kit room. The moment we entered all guys instantaneously picked up their pillows! Ranjit was expected to carry out a late-night attack! It was 2.55 AM by the time me hit the bed. So the 13th of March had come to a glorious end. Was thanking my stars for being an Army Cadet! There is nothing better in this world than being a RIMCOLLIAN and with this thought in my mind I dozed off.

14 March 1984. Woke up at 0650 hrs. Pathak landed up. I desperately tried to wake up Chow (whose bed was beside me) on the pretext that tea had come. He refused to get lured by it. Pathak managed a scooter from a Rimcollian and we took off for IMA. I got my stuff and while returning we had a flat. We changed the tyre and reached by 8 AM. That Rimcollian was very sorry for the puncture! Rather nice of him! He then requested me to fill some air in the back tyre in Garhi. I tried opening the scooter but it refused to open. The handle bar refused to budge. Prem (MOP) tried his hand, but of no use).

Then Maj Sharma turned up.

He just jerked the scooter a bit & rather jerked it pretty hard and the handle bar got free. We wanted to move for breakfast. So Chow, his brother, Prem, Sudhi, Virk, Pope & me moved towards the Mess. Sat just below the PW RIMC crest. Turned out to be an excellent breakfast. Sanda & Bachan Dutt had to do a lot of running around. Slowly all the stuff started drifting towards our side. We probably sat at the table till 9.45 AM. Chow had to leave as he had to catch the D Dun B Bay Express. All of us did feel sad bidding him good bye. We can only hope for the next Rimcollians to enjoy his company. The rest of us walked down to the office and examined the various mementos brought out during the Diamond Jubilee. Bought a Diamond Jubilee plate. Now it was time for us to move. Prem was also coming along to Roorkee with us (Pope & me). Sudhi was also supposed to come. But the Athletics practice kept him behind. Prem managed a Jeep. We then piled on to it & bid farewell to all the guys around. Thus the Reunion 1984 was over.

Well my nut at present is filled with the wonderful thought of being a Rimcollian. I am proud of it (I'm sure every Rimcollian would be proud of spending five glorious years in this RIMC). I've missed out quite a few incidents and I've tried to put down all that I could remember on paper. Pope will be filling in rest of the details. Feel totally at home once inside the RIMC campus. The Rimcos there are a wonderful lot They go out of their way to help us (especially the GCs) and they really like our visiting RIMC. None of them ever grumbled while quite a few of us, GCs, started vomiting and kicking up a racket. It was really nice of them to join with us and make it a very pleasant Reunion. We also did our best to make it a pleasant happy & hilarious Reunion for them. I hope they enjoyed it as much as we did! Long live the RIMC.

(Pity the Naval & Air force Cadets - my Sympathies !!!) ■

Humility in Hall Bazaar

—Lt Gen RS Sujana (retd)

Former Commandant, Indian Military Academy

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was shared by Captain (IN) Arvind Kumar, 340/Shivaji, 1962-67, who recently fought a near fatal accident to be back among us, doing what he does best — sharing stories and pulling legs.

During a trip to the holy city of Amritsar, a naval mate of mine, Arvind, took me on a memorable walk through the back lanes of the Old City. A raconteur by habit, I was regaled by many a tale. When we entered the famous Hall Bazaar, he halted in front of Sur Chemists. This, he said, was once 'Surbabu and Company,' owned by Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw's father, a doctor, and served as his clinic.

The Field Marshal, born and brought up here, had studied at Amritsar's famed Hindu College. Years later, he visited his alma mater, and humbly attributed his achievements to his former gurus and mates there. His sister, Mrs Chawahji, was a respected and caring mathematics teacher at the local St Francis School.

Arvind's father, a college mate of the Field Marshal, also had a family shop here and a visit there was equally interesting. My attention was drawn to a photograph of an elderly gentleman. 'Who is this?' I enquired. 'My grandfather,' said Arvind, and kept quiet. Thankfully, another person furthered the introduction. The portrait was of Prof Ram Chander Kohli, remembered and respected for his convictions, humane and humble qualities, an outstanding educationalist



Prof Ram Chander Kohli

who was an MA in pure maths from University of Calcutta in 1922 and BA in French from University of Punjab.

The professor, a person of simple habits, always wore plain clothes, but he had his own way to convey a message. Once, like a commoner, he had queued up to register himself in a government office.



When his turn came, the clerk, thinking him to be illiterate, held the professor's thumb and impressed it in lieu of the signature. Unperturbed, the professor took out his pen, signed and endorsed his name, annotated with MA, BA.

The clerk, taken aback, asked the next person in line, 'Sign karoge ki angutha lagaoge?' The lesson was delivered.

The professor worked in the English department prior to Independence. Once, an Englishman walked into his office. Uninvited, he took a chair and directed him to do something which was in contravention to rules. The professor refused to abide. The Englishman was given the option to leave his office or be

thrown out! Dazed, he left in a huff.

To avoid any embarrassment, the professor handed over his resignation letter. The day he left office was a hot summer day. Near his house, he observed a beggar in a rather pitiable state, trudging barefoot. The professor asked Arvind to give the beggar a pair of his shoes. A few days later, the same beggar was found barefoot again.

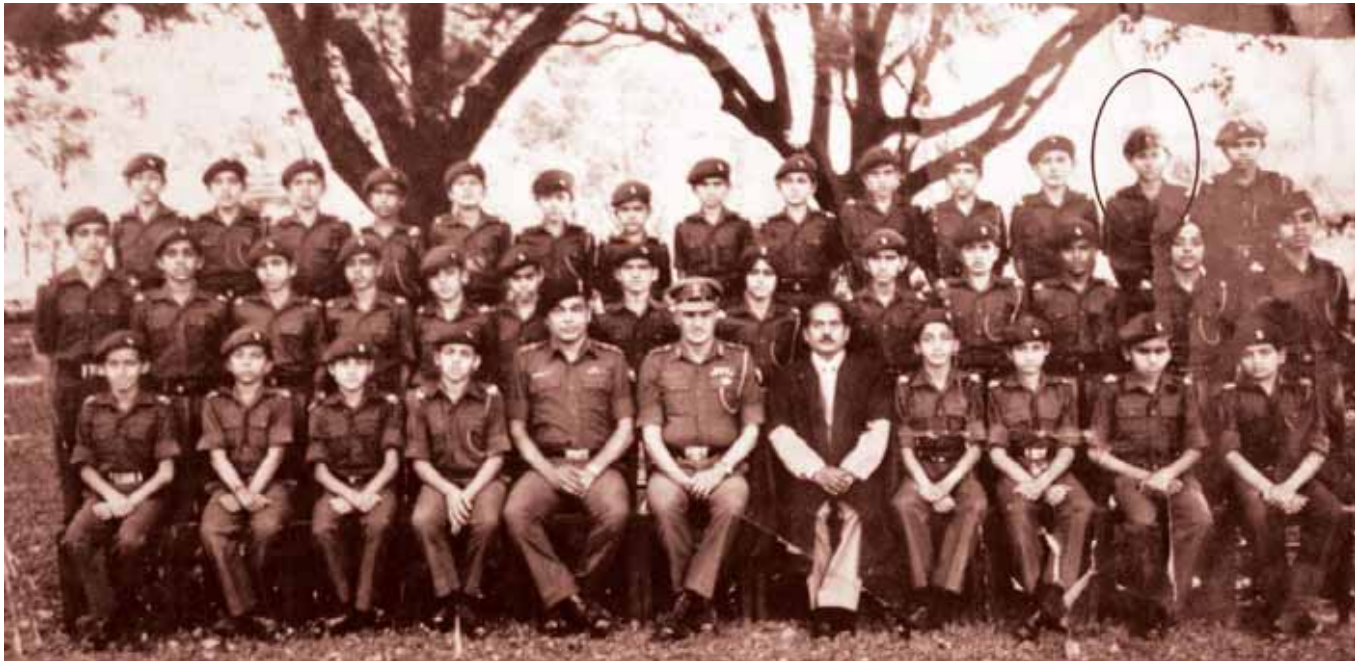
The professor asked his grandson to give him another pair of shoes. The grandson protested. The professor replied that the beggar must have bartered the first pair for something he needed more. The grandson had to relent.

I again looked at the portrait. Kindness seemed to flow from his eyes. I left with a prayer that may many such plebeians be born to right the growing decadence in our society. ■

(Courtesy: The Tribune, Chandigarh)

Amazing journey from Army to Amazon and beyond

—Rahul Kesar
RIMC 128th Course, Shivaji



A greenhorn Rahul Kesar in his first term, standing second from right in the last row

Our Alma mater not only moulds each one of us, but also leaves profound impressions on our minds and indelible imprints on our lives. I still vividly remember the first day, when I was allocated my bed and a cupboard in the Shivaji section Junior Dorm. Lying down in the cold winter chill, that night was the first experience away from the protected environment of my home. That was the beginning of many life lessons that I would imbibe during my stay at RIMC. These lessons and learning experiences have been instrumental in shaping each one of us and laying the foundation for our future success. The transformation of a young boy to a mentally and physically independent and robust individual is the basic building block for a strong character that can withstand the rigours of life. All these attributes along with the

all-round personality developed at RIMC was the key factor that made me excel at NDA and IMA and enabled me to pass out as the Academy Cadet Adjutant at both the institutions.

Being commissioned in Corps of Army Air Defence gave me the opportunity to be exposed to technology through various courses such as Long Gunnery Staff course. Having been selected for Career Course in United States added a different perspective altogether. After 15 years of service when I took PMR due to personal constraints, I knew that one needed the right platform for the transition to the corporate side. To equip myself for the new set of challenges, I joined the MBA program at Indian School of Business (ISB) at Hyderabad in 2013 that was the perfect platform for my transition to a corporate career. ISB gave me an

opportunity to learn from the best in the industry, however it was the attributes that were imbibed during the college days that helped me make the most of things there. Being in a totally alien environment and competing with people who were the best in their fields in the corporate world can get overwhelming. But the one thing which RIMC ingrains in you is to ensure how to make the best of arduous situations and wear a number of hats simultaneously.

In 2013, as I graduated from ISB, I embarked on my corporate journey as AGM at Larsen & Toubro, Mumbai, where I was leading technology and defence projects for India and the international market. A desire to decode the fast-growing e-commerce industry and understand its dynamics led me to join Amazon, where I headed their Fulfilment Centre buildout operations

across India. Leading cross-functional teams to achieve Amazon's high-growth targets, my team actively contributed to its growth from 2014 to 2016. Lessons of quick thinking, optimisation (Minimum Input Maximum output), creative problem-solving ("Jugaad") and motivating cohesive teams (Go and manage!) that I had learnt at college helped me as I created the fastest logistics network by launching fulfilment centres across India, which won us the 'Cowboy' award by Jeff Bezos who met me during one of his India visits.

RIMC instils self-belief and the confidence to take on new challenges. In late 2016, I decided to take the road less travelled and follow the entrepreneurial calling. Like all Rimcollians, love for travel and a penchant to explore undiscovered destinations led me to establish Towno, a travel tech company that focuses on experiential travel. I was eager to ensure it was not a run-of-the-mill travel company and used a data and process-driven approach that ensured unique, personalized and localized experiences with quality customer service for its customers. Towno's efforts at the grassroots level were recognized by the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand and the organization was recognized with the Outstanding Achievement award. Conquering Uttarakhand, Goa and Himachal, Towno has also made its inroads and partnerships in Asia and Europe.

Capitalizing on my understanding of the ecommerce industry, in 2017, I also launched Saksham Logistics, a flexible, plug-and-play modern age logistics network for e-commerce and logistics companies by eliminating their fixed costs and set up quick-scale delivery model. Setting up an e-commerce delivery network in the interiors of India was a daunting task and we faced a number of challenges. Catering to the needs of e-commerce giants such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Reliance, Saksham is today a major logistics player in North India covering over 30+ cities and employing 750+ employees.

As Covid hit the world with both uncertainty and panic early this year, we too felt the pressure as the travel sector was hit and the country plunged into a lockdown. Not willing to let go of the team members, we were determined not to cut jobs or fire any of my team. Instead, we looked for an opportunity in the crisis and conceptualized and launched a Door-to-Door delivery service that provided customers with safe and convenient access to their daily needs during the lockdown and beyond the lockdown. From delivering food, essential items to packages to books, our team swiftly executed the app-based delivery platform that allowed the team to sustain as well survive the adversity. With the travel sector revival,



The legendary Jeff Bezos felicitating Rahul Kesar during his Amazon days

the team is now geared up to build both the verticals side by side converting adversity into opportunity. The organizational values and culture we are trying to develop in the institutions are a reflection of values instilled by my alma mater, which is the core foundation for success. ■

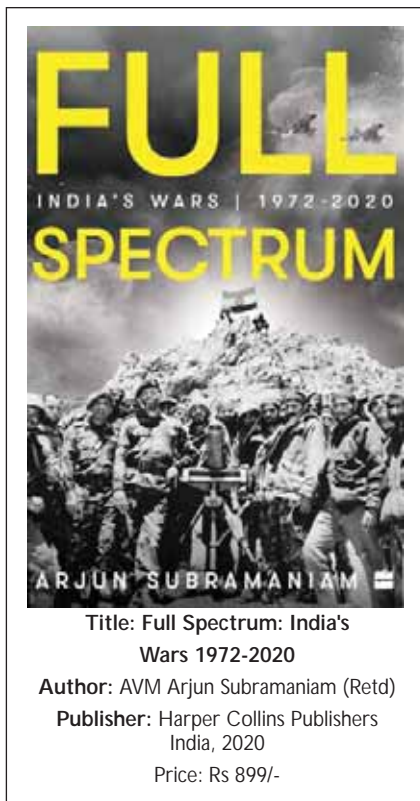
Conveying Sense of Deterrence

—Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur VM (Retd)

It was sometime in 2007 when Ramchandra Guha's book 'India after Gandhi' was released - and it lamented the fact that India's history had stopped being written after it got independence - and how his hope was that the book would fill that void. People who read it marveled at the deep research carried out of India's history of nation building since that wonderful day. In 2013, this reviewer too read that post-independence history and it, somehow, came up in a telephonic conversation with Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, who was then commanding an operational headquarter of the IAF at Pune. Arjun was a bit glum and said, "Sir, that historical narration of 700 odd pages, covering six decades, has just about ten pages of the numerous wars that India has fought!" He may well have said 'fifteen' pages, memory fails me, but the point being made was that there was no authoritative and researched account of India's conflicts, perhaps the highest in numbers that had been thrust on a fledgling democracy so soon after its independence while struggling with the effects of a traumatic partition that killed millions. Then, AVM Subramaniam said, and it's so clear to me even seven years after that telephonic conversation, "I am researching and writing on our wars."

As it turned out, AVM Subramaniam's first book, 'India's Wars,' published in 2016 covered conflicts till the 1971 Indo-Pak war that resulted in the birth of Bangladesh. "Full Spectrum: India's Wars 1972 - 2020" is a continuation of that documentation as he chronicles the void in recording of India's multifarious and multi-dimensional conflicts from 1972 till date.

The book starts with an introduction that gives the lay reader the basics on what war is all about and the various



Title: Full Spectrum: India's Wars 1972-2020

Author: AVM Arjun Subramaniam (Retd)

Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2020

Price: Rs 899/-

ways it manifests itself; this academic discourse in a historical account is welcome for its uniqueness as it helps the reader understand the nuances of conflicting ideas - which war is actually all about. It then moves on to discussing the insurgencies, call them rebellions, in the North Eastern states in what were collectively called the 'Seven sisters.' Very few Indians of the present generation, nay, even those in their greying years, know how the Indian state used its armed forces to subdue the violent elements and enable politicians bring Nagaland and Mizoram in the national mainstream. It's the use of the offensive element of the IAF that is most fascinating and when one discusses now-a-days whether air power should be employed in internal insurgencies one needs to remember that there is a

precedence of its use, but as a last resort - yes, that desperate situation had arisen in present day Mizoram and Nagaland!

The narration shifts westward to Op Meghdoot, the ongoing Siachen saga, the disastrous Sri Lanka peace-keeping episode in 1987 down South, the quick airborne intervention to upset the coup plotters in Maldives, the plunging of J&K up North in a crisis in the late 1980s (with full support from Pakistan) and then to Kargil 1999 -- the inquisitive lens of Arjun Subramaniam takes the reader through the trials and tribulations of India as it enters the twenty first century. 'Kargil,' is discussed threadbare, with no punches pulled in talking about what went wrong in those hills where we lost 520 brave Indians; this added emphasis is done on purpose as Indian leadership comes face to face with a well-coordinated scenario of hybrid warfare in the subsequent years leading up to the Chinese incursion in Eastern Ladakh this year. AVM Subramaniam's analysis wades through the December 2001 Parliament attack and the resulting military activation in Op Parakram, the deadly 26/11 Mumbai terrorist mayhem followed by the Uri carnage and the even more deadly Pulwama terrorist strike in February 2019 to drive home the point of hybridisation of threats to India. The Indian response in the beginning of the century, characterized as 'strategic restraint,' gives way to a policy of 'strategic offense' demonstrated by the 'surgical' strikes by the Army post-Uri and then the IAF attack on terrorist training camps at Balakot in mainland Pakistan on 26 Feb 2019. *This change is captured very succinctly by the author when he writes that, "Recalibrating its relationship with its adversaries can help India define the extent to which it is willing to be pushed by them. There is a growing willingness by India to move*

from reactive to proactive deterrence, but it is too early to assess whether it will be possible for India to walk the talk given the capability deficit that exists across the national security architecture."

So, *Full Spectrum* takes its readers through the intense security challenges that India has faced though detailed research done by the Air Marshal for almost a decade - that, runs into fifty-one pages of end notes and references and an interviewee list of sixty- six people from around the world! There are 'lessons learned' segments, along with suggestions for the way forward.

Are there campaigns that have been missed out? For sure there are - for example, the chapter on UN Missions that India has participated in lacks many missions; but the fact remains that to do

justice to India's contribution to peacekeeping would require a full book by itself - a tabulated listing, though, could have helped the reader absorb the enormity of India's contribution. Similarly, while campaigns and operations analyzed in the book have a wealth of data in terms of names of important personages, dates, place names and how conflicts developed, a reader would have benefitted with some more maps or sketches to understand their progress. Once again, the author would have had to make a choice - to keep a narration of five tumultuous decades within an acceptable length of 460 odd pages or let it become an unwieldy one. He has chosen the former and made up by adding an 'essential reading list' for the reader who wants to get into greater

details of the vast canvas of conflicts. That's a wise choice he has exercised.

A war thrust upon a nation leaves it with no choice but to fight back, win and convey a sense of deterrence in no uncertain terms to the adversary. AVM Arjun Subramaniam's *Full Spectrum* has this sense watermarked as a thread in the narration of challenges that have come India's way in its growing up years. It's a fine reference book for all who want to know the invaluable contribution of India's armed forces in nation building. ■

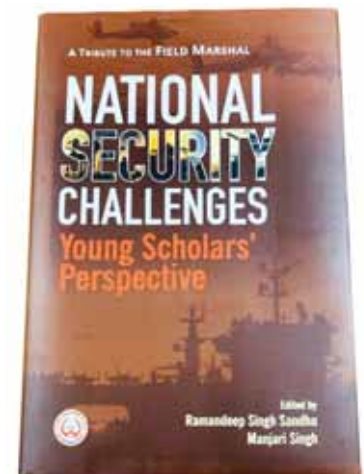
(Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, 798/Pratap, was at RIMC from 1973-77. The reviewer is Addl Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi)

National Security Challenges: Young Scholars' Perspectives

Ed. by Col Ramandeep Singh Sandhu (Rimcollian) and Ms Manjari Singh



Release and presentation of the book to the VCOAS, now the COAS



Col Ramandeep Singh Sandhu, 1336/Ranjit, was at RIMC from 1984-1989. The book was released in August 2020

QUICK FLIP

Cmde Saurav Deb Appointed CMD, NEPA Ltd

Senior Indian Navy officer, Commodore Saurav Deb (1095/S) has taken over as the Chairman and Managing Director, NEPA Ltd after an illustrious career in uniform. NEPA Limited (National Newsprint and Paper Mills Limited), is a PSU under the administrative control of the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises. The object of the company is to produce quality Newsprint as per the demand of the



market. Alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla Pune and Naval College of Engineering Lonavla, Commodore Saurav Deb completed 33 years in the Indian Navy. Commodore Deb is Post Graduate from Defence Services Staff College Wellington and Master of Management Studies from College of Defence Management Secunderabad. (Excerpted From CapitalKhabar.in) ■

Rimcollian in the CQ 100: Meet India's Most Influential Cyber Warriors



In a world so connected with each other, one of the most needed yet feared space is the cyberspace. From bank frauds to social media impersonation, cyber bullying and cyber extortion, people on the internet have had to suffer all. The420.in has come up with a Cyber Quotient- CQ100 list which includes India's most influential, trusted cyber pioneers who have helped build the country's cyber ecosystem. The list includes Mr Alok Vijayant (1263/C) was at RIMC from 1982-86. ■

RUNVEER



All in the Family! Brig Steve Ismail (1083/P) being felicitated for winning the Runveer 2.0 Infantry Marathon by Lt Gen PN Anathanarayanan (914/C), Commandant, The Infantry School, in November 2020.

MATHEMATICIAN

A young Rimcollian and an exceptionally brilliant Mathematician, Yathendra Sreevastava (2785/C), has joined The Doon School as a faculty on 01 August 2020. It was only about a few years ago that he was giving

young DOSCOs a run for the game of Squash being the Captain of RIMC Squash ladder. Now he is impressing the younger generation in Mathematics. He dreams of shaping the Rimcos someday as a faculty member. ■

AWARDED



Gp Capt Deepak Ahluwalia being awarded VSM on Air Force Day in October 2020

JEE 100 PERCENT



For 18-year-old Laksh Gupta, improving self has been a major focus and that is the reason why he chose to appear in JEE Main 2020 twice - January and September. He had scored 99.8 percentile in January exam and has achieved a perfect 100 percentile in the JEE Main conducted in September 2020. He is among the 24 perfect scorers of JEE Main 2020. Laksh cleared class XII from Sanskriti School, Chanakyapuri (and had earlier studied at Rashtriya Indian Military College- 2971/S). He had also won a gold medal at the International Economics Olympiad 2019, which was held at St. Petersburg, Russia. "We have experienced a major event that will go down in the history books. (Excerpted from Education Times.)

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE



Col Pawan Bhatnagar (974/S) has been awarded Outstanding In House Security Manage / Director by the Leela Group. He is Director of Security for the Leela Palaces & Resorts.

COL SARFRAZ SINGH (1645/S) ON AN ADVENTURE AND AWARD SPREE



Sarfraz — earning his wings as a mountaineer

UTTRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Col. Sarfraz Singh had just completed the National Integration Trekking Expedition to Gorichen Glacier and was somewhere in the vicinity of 19,000 feet, on his way to the Gorichen Peak with his team, when he was informed about being one of the recipients of this year's Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award.

A member of the elite 6th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, Sarfraz is more than just a mountaineer, although his achievements as one are quite distinguished.

He is also a sky-diver, a combat free faller and a certified Scuba Rescue Diver. On the mountains, he has summited the highest peaks in the four continents — Mt.



Scaling new heights: Col. Sarfraz Singh posing with a hockey atop Mt. Everest. ♦ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Everest (Asia), Mt. Aconcagua (Argentina, American), Mt. Elbrus (Russia, Europe) and Mt. Kilimanjaro (Tanzania, Africa).

Pedigree

His lineage is equally accomplished — he is the son of Arjuna Awardee Col. Balbir Singh Katar, who won hockey

the armed forces and on the mountains," an emotional Balbir said.

An alumnus of the RIMC, the NDA and the IMA, Sarfraz excelled at boxing and squash. With service rules barring him from indulging in contact sports professionally, it was his induction into the Para Regiment in 2001 that gave him a taste for adventure sports, beginning with the Army's 2004 expedition to the 7,058 m high Mt. Nan in Ladakh.

Everest (Asia), Mt. Aconcagua (Argentina, American), and a fourth generation armyman.

"People tell me I have an Arjuna and now my son has also got this award but honestly, I think he has achieved something far greater than me. This award is much, much bigger and I am proud of his achievements, both in

"I was deputy to Brig. Sarfraz Singh Shukhawat there and he was the first person I called up to inform about this award and dedicate it to him," the 43-year-old Sarfraz said.

And for all the gratitude he has for the award, he cannot wait to join his team on the next expedition.

Team NIMAS Successfully Completes Month Long Expedition in Arunachal Pradesh

Team National Institute of Mountaineering & Allied Sports (NIMAS) has successfully completed a month-long epic expedition covering all the major seven rivers of Arunachal Pradesh wef 22 Nov 2020 to 23 Dec 2020. The team led by Col. Sarfraz Singh, Director, NIMAS comprised of 10 local youths of the state and 15 army personnel from NIMAS. Col Sarfraz Singh, who is with the elite Para Regiment of the Indian Army, has been the director of NIMAS in Arunachal Pradesh since 2017. The elite adventurer's father Col Balbir Singh is a member of the 1968 Olympics bronze medal-winning Indian hockey team and a recipient of Arjuna Award.

The aim of the expedition was to explore Arunachal Pradesh through the major tributaries of Brahmaputra and promote adventure tourism in the state. It was also in the line with Central Government Fit India Movement. The expedition has also set a new National Record by covering a total distance of 720 kms on seven rivers, namely Kameng, Dibang, Nao-dihing, Lohit,



Subhansri, Siyom and Siyang. The highly skilled rafting team of NIMAS negotiated more than 300 rapids which included 27 grade-V, 41 grade-IV and 98 grade-III plus rapids. There were large number of stretches on these

rivers which were done for the first time. After this record-breaking expedition, team NIMAS Dirang will now launch first Winter Trekking Expedition on the famous Bailey's Trail in the month of Jan 2021. ■

THE NDA POP - NOVEMBER 2020

—Col Vijay Gidh, VSM (Retd)



Rimcollians of 139th Course NDA on their Passing Out in November 2020 with GOC- in-C Southern Command, Lt Gen CP Mohanty (845/S)

The bi-annual Passing Out Parade (POP) at the National Defence Academy (NDA) is always a much eagerly awaited event. And if the award winners at the POP all happen to be from RIMC, one can imagine the sense of pride in witnessing the parade. However, the conduct of the parade on 07 November 2020 had to be suitably modified to ensure COVID -19 related precautions. The Academy did not allow spectators, including the media and cadets' parents to attend the parade. Fortunately, the event was covered live on Doordarshan channels and social media platforms.

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Bhaduria was the Reviewing Officer for the POP of the 139th Course. The parade at the Khetarpal Parade Ground generally comprises about 1000 cadets bidding farewell to their senior colleagues. However, in view of the restrictions imposed, only 540 cadets participated in the parade; 302 of these cadets were from the 139th Course. These included 222 Army cadets, 45 Naval cadets and 35 Air Force cadets. There were 17 cadets from Friendly Foreign Countries (Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Maldives, Bhutan, Tanzania,

Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Myanmar) passing out.

The Air Chief in his address to the NDA cadets said, "NDA is not just the Cradle of Leadership but a true Cradle of Jointmanship. The vast experience of joint training at the NDA needs to be carried forward to the respective service academies. Today's battle space is highly complex and multi-dimensional, with unpredictable security scenarios and high operational tempo. Thus, operational response will demand synergy among the forces. Therefore, it is necessary to continue the bond that you have forged here with your course-mates

and squadron-mates throughout your military career.”

Air Chief Marshal RK Bhaduria has also held the position of the Commandant, NDA in the past. He is an alumnus of 56th Course along with his course-mates - Chief of Army Staff, Gen MM Naravane and Chief of Naval Staff, Adm Karambir Singh.

Notwithstanding the limitations of Covid-19 restrictions, the spirit of the event was intact. It was a perfect display of high level of discipline and synchronization as the 302 cadets passed through the portals of the Khetarpal Parade Ground. The haunting strains of Auld Lang Syne and the Adjutant on his charger accompanied the passing out cadets to The Final Steps (Antim Pag).

The most thrilling event for the Rimcollians who witnessed the parade on TV was the Award Ceremony. The President's Gold Medal was won by Battalion Cadet Captain Anirudh Singh for standing first in the overall order of merit, the Silver Medal by Divisional Cadet Captain Somay Badola for standing second and Bronze Medal by Battalion Cadet Captain Anmol for standing third. India Squadron bagged the prestigious 'Chiefs of Staff Banner' for being the Champion Squadron.

This is the fourth time that RIMC cadets have won all three awards during the NDA POP; the previous three occasions being during the 73rd Course in December 1987, the 85th Course in December 1993 in Dec 1993 and the 129th Course in November 2015.

This unique achievement by the Rimcollian cadets of 139th Course, reminded me of the NDA POP five years ago on 28 November 2015. It was a cold misty morning and the Pune temperature had dipped to 12 degrees Celsius, when Capt (IN) Vijay Naphade, Col Priotosh Deb and self were fortunate to attend the POP of the 129th Course. All the three award winners were Rimcollians then too - ACC PK Mohanty, BCC Abhishek Kundalia and ACA Anmol Rawat.

The passing out course consisted of 23 Rimcollian cadets, of which 17 were



With Lt Gen CP Mohanty, GOC-in-C Southern Command



from the Army and six from the Navy. In addition to winning the Gold Medal, BCC Anirudh Singh was also adjudged the Best Army Cadet and was awarded the Chiefs of Staff Trophy for maximum contribution to Jointmanship. Anirudh had secured the All India Rank Second in the final NDA selection list in 2017. BCC Anmol was adjudged the Best Naval Cadet and also awarded the Best Cadet in Drill and Riding. BCC Ajay Kumar was awarded the Silver Medal for the Best Sportsman, while CQMS Ajay Joseph won the Silver Medal for being the Best in Sailing.

Lt Gen CP Mohanty, GOC-in-C Southern Command interacted with the Rimcollian passing out cadets after the parade. He congratulated the medal winners and exhorted the cadets to do well in their service career. Earlier, the Army Commander had hosted the

award-winning cadets on the eve of the POP at HQ Southern Command on 06 November. The Army Commander urged them to continue to train harder and strive for excellence to serve the Nation.

The Convocation Ceremony of the course was held at Habibullah Hall on 06 November. The Chief Guest for the occasion was the Vice Chancellor Savitribai Phule Pune University, Mr Nitin R Karmalkar. He congratulated the cadets for undergoing the training with dedication and hard work. 217 cadets were conferred the degree of Jawaharlal Nehru University, which included 49 cadets in the Science Stream, 113 cadets in the Computer Science Stream and 55 cadets in the Arts Stream. 12 cadets from Friendly Foreign Countries were also awarded degrees. The fourth batch of B.Tech

course, comprising 45 Naval cadets and 35 Air Force cadets also received completion certificates. They will continue the fourth year of their B.Tech curriculum at their respective academies.

The NDA has instituted a trophy in memory of Lt Ummer Fayaz, an alumnus of 129th Course, who was kidnapped and killed by militants while he was on leave in Shopian district of J&K in May 2017. This trophy, instituted from the current term, will be awarded to the cadet displaying overall improvement in performance. Ummer's father, Fayaz Ahmed, said "It's a big honour for us. Though he is not with us, but his sacrifice for the country will inspire future officers of the armed forces." Ummer's sister Asmat said, "People here and across the country remember him as a brave soldier. We are thankful to his battalion (Rajputana Rifles) and the NDA."

The NDA cadets proceeded for eight weeks of term break a day after the POP. The passing out cadets will join their respective pre-commissioning training academies thereafter, while the cadets of the junior courses will report back to the NDA on 04 January 2021.

I spoke to the three medal winners at their home a week after the POP. They were all grateful for the excellent grooming they had received during their 5-years schooling at RIMC. It helped them tremendously in the NDA, where they could perform well.

Anirudh is an Army cadet and hails from Kathua. His father and mother are both teachers in a Government Primary School in Kathua. The Jammu Links News of 09 November 2020 carried the headlines "Two Kathua Cadets Create History" in its local edition. Anirudh mentioned that the guidance, experience and the training that RIMC provided the young cadets at every step of their journey has been incredible and unparalleled. Also having termers from all across the country was a different learning experience and gave them a sense of belongingness.

Somay is an Army cadet and hails from Dehradun. His father serves in the



The three Rimcollian medal winners

Shashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and is presently on deputation with the Intelligence Bureau (IB), while his mother teaches psychology in the Him Jyoti School, Dehradun. The Garhwal Post, Dehradun on 10 November 2020 proudly carried the article "Rimcollian cadets score Grand Slam at NDA POP." Somay confided that initially he had found the curriculum tough at RIMC, but it was his cadet guardian, Cdt Chigangbam Rakesh who helped him adjust to the new environment. The seniors have always been good mentors to the junior cadets, and the cadet guardian - ward relationship in RIMC is something to be proud of.

Anmol is a Naval cadet and belongs to Palampur. His father retired as a Chief Petty Officer from the Indian Navy, while his mother is a housewife. His course mates and the seniors motivated him to pull along at RIMC and adjust to the new environment. This helped him to do well later in RIMC and the NDA.

Anirudh and Somay were fortunate to visit RIMC on 01 December, before the cadets proceeded for their winter break on 02 December. They were able to interact with the young cadets and motivate them to do well at the NDA.

The RIMC cadets were particularly proud of the fine performance of our ex-cadets during the NDA POP.

Col Ajay Kumar, Commandant, RIMC attributed the success of our cadets to their resolute hard work duly guided by the values imbibed at the RIMC. The dedicated endeavours of the RIMC administrative staff, Academic and support staff, have steadfastly persisted in shaping the 'Scholar Warrior Cadets' as devoted 'Sentinels of the Nation'. RIMC was ranked 9th in the Education World India School Ranking 2020- 21 among the Top 10 Boys Boarding Schools.

The landslide success and exceptional feat of the RIMC cadets at the NDA are a result of the nurturing that has happened at the 'Nursery of Leadership' - the RIMC. Forged in fires of gallantry, valour, grit, skill, perseverance and wrought with esprit de corps, camaraderie, bonhomie, these future 'Leaders of Men' are revered for their academic, sports acquisitions and scholastic achievements. Fostered by a secular, prefectorial environment and dedicated pastoral care, these trailblazers are just the right stuff legends are made of. ■

Long Live RIMC!

THE RIMCOLLIAN SHOW AT NDA

NDA: Nov 2020

Our boys sweeping the awards, winning the **President's Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals.**

- BCC Anirudh Singh (Gold), DCC Somay Badola (Silver) and BCC Anmol (Bronze).
 - Best Army Cadet - BCC Anirudh Singh.
 - Best Naval Cadet - BCC Anmol.
 - Best Sportsman - BCC Ajay Singh Bhadauria.
 - Best in Riding - BCC Anmol.
 - Best in Drill - BCC Anmol.
 - Best in Sailing - CQMH Ajay Joseph.
- Chiefs of Staff Trophy for Maximum Contribution to Jointmanship - BCC Anirudh Singh.

RIMCOLLIANS AT IMA



ACA Watandeep Singh, a Rimcollian has been awarded the prestigious Sword of Honour during the POP at IMA in Dec 2020.



Col & Mrs Gidh with BCA Watandeep Singh Sidhu in NDA, Nov 2019

Rimcollians continue to excel even at the post training academies. It was very heartening to learn about ACA Watandeep Singh Sidhu, a Rimcollian, winning the coveted Sword of Honour

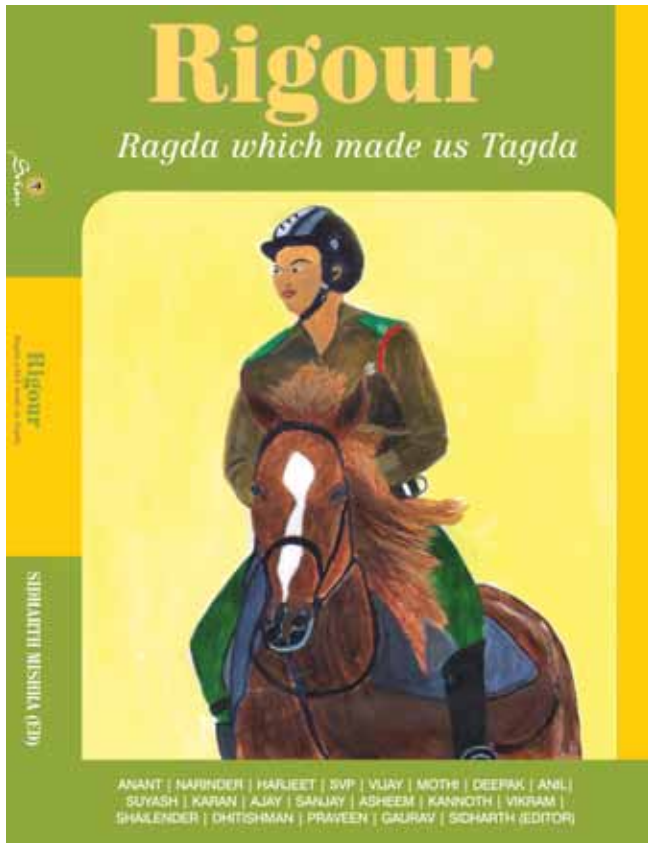
at the Passing Out Parade held in IMA on 12 December 2020. The Times of India, Chandigarh of 13 December 2020 proudly carried the article 'Cadet from Punjab bags coveted Sword of Honour at IMA POP'.

Watandeep had stood first in the NDA in the Inter Battalion X-Country Championship and was awarded Blazer in two disciplines - X-Country and PT. He has been commissioned in the elite Parachute Regiment. ■

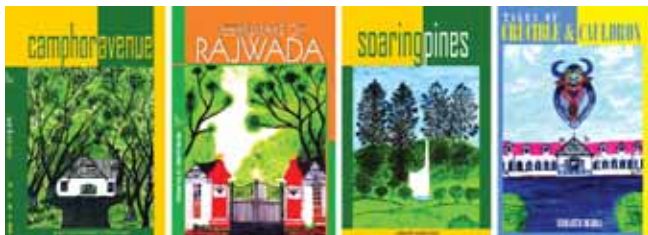
Camphor 9.0

Rigour

Ragda which made us Tagda



2021



2013

2014

2015

2016



2017

2018

2019

2020

What a wonderful idea! It is so very absorbing, particularly when one can relate to every single word in it. Needless to mention, one invariably homes in onto one's contemporaries. To that extent, your mix of the young and the old is a great blend.

— Maj Gen H Dharmarajan

Before I sign off on this (Rigour), it is worth highlighting some wonderful fundamentals of our alma mater. Nowhere in the world would you see a tapestry of students gathered under a single roof as we do in RIMC.

— Brig Mothi Jacob

The Camphor series is an alternate history of the College. Anyone who flips through the series also passes through the portals of our Alma Mater in a time warp. I once read through the entire series in one sitting to gauge the effect of this time travel. It is fascinating to say the least.

— Col Vikram Kadian

Simple account of such complex dimensions of five years of life time, have made Camphor series immortal already and seem to be envy for others and OUR PRIDE.

— Col Vivek Sharma

So, this one is for those times where rolling was completely allowed and not making national headlines. This one is for X and his creed who taught us so many lessons at that young age.

— Wg Cdr Dhithishman Hazarika

Title: **Rigour** (Hardbound; 238 pages);
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Appa: Vajpayee's Friend, Advani's Confidant, A Self-Effacing Man

—Sidharth Mishra
115th Ranjit; 1979-83



Narayan Madhav Ghatate was at RIMC from 1949-53

Photo: Indian Express

In the passing away of senior Supreme Court lawyer Dr Narayan Madhav 'Appa' Ghatate on January 24, 2021, many would recall his silent contribution in the building of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its predecessor Bharatiya Jana Sangh. For those who do not know Appa, he was the all-weather bridge between late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his deputy Lal Krishna Advani.

The initiation of my acquaintance with Appa did not have much to do

with journalism. He had attended the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College in Dehradun between 1949-53, the school I studied at three decades later. At an alumni function, I was introduced to Appa by patriarch of the school's alumni association late Major General Virendra Singh, whose family incidentally owns the Modern School, sometime in the 1990s, soon after I had landed a job with The Pioneer.

Since like Appa, I too had not made to

the armed forces and professionally waded a different channel, we two got together well. He had a good legal practice, the grapevine in the alumni circles would be that he was even hired by that smart Alec Charles Sobhraj, the enigmatic international gangster who enjoyed no less than a celebrity status.

Once he called me to his Hailey Road apartment to discuss the possibility of doing a book on all persons VK Krishna Menon. I wondered what

brought Appa to his company, "I was his legal junior when he took up practice in Supreme Court after resigning from Nehru's Cabinet," he had replied. It was at that meeting that one realized that Appa was not only about his legal practice and friendship with Vajpayee and Advani but much more, a keen student of nation's history and politics.

A very well-drafted obituary by Vinay Sitapati, the author of Jugalbandi: BJP Before Modi somehow failed to mention a vital clog in Appa's personality that was his schooling at the RIMC in Dehradun. The institution known for having given the finest military leaders to both India and Pakistan, embedded in Appa certain ethos which were to stand out all through his life.

Despite being from a family which was the founding pillar of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), Hindu Mahasabha and Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), and his lifelong loyalty to the right of the centre ideology, Appa was much at ease even in company of school's alumni even from across the border. He was part of the delegation led by Gen Vishwa Nath Sharma, the former Chief of Army Staff, which travelled across the Radcliffe line in 1996 to invite their school mates to Dehradun to celebrate RIMC's platinum jubilee in March 1997.

A large Pakistani delegation had turned up under the leadership of veteran diplomat and former Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yakub Khan. The unique thing about this visit was that the Pakistani military leaders were hosted by their Indian counterparts and they stayed at their homes including one at the house of Gen Harbaksh Singh, who was instrumental in India handing the neighbours a humiliating defeat in 1965.

Reading this one would realise that Appa was much influenced by his lifelong friend Vajpayee or was it vice versa! The friendship of Appa and Vajpayee went back to 1957, when the young law student in Delhi was given the responsibility to take the newly-elected member of parliament around the city. And Appa did it with some flamboyance having Vajpayee pillion riding on his Royal Enfield motorcycle.



Ghatate edited several books including a four-volume collection of Vajpayee's parliamentary speeches and co-authored two books with him

Appa came in contact with Lal Krishna Advani when the latter joined Vajpayee's team sometime in late 1950s. Like his father Babasaheb Ghatate, who was bridge between Hindu Mahasabha leader VD Savarkar and RSS head Guru Golwarkar, Appa was between Vajpayee and Advani. He enjoyed confidence of both the stalwarts, something which was impossible when they were at the height of their power during the NDA I regime.

Appa was a self-effacing person and never showed-off his high station. He once shared that his outlook was much moulded by his teachers at the boarding school which included a fair sprinkling of British masters.

During the alumni meets in Dehradun, when his contemporaries from the school would stay in well-appointed guest rooms of a military mess, Ghatate preferred rubbing shoulders with the 'hoi polloi' in the school dormitories. He went back to his school every year for the annual reunion till 2019. Due to Covid lockdown there was no reunion in 2020. Alas! He would not be there to attend the school centenary in 2022.

Post Vajpayee's demise, we have witnessed publication of some very well-researched books on the late Prime

Minister including those by Sitapati and Vajpayee's close aide Shakti Sinha but it was Appa who was the 'official' custodian of Vajpayee papers. He edited Vajpayee's speeches in parliament published in the multi-volume under the title, 'Four Decades in Parliament'.

Appa's scholarship was not limited to Vajpayee papers but he articulated so very well on issues of Parliamentary Law and Criminal Jurisprudence, including capital punishment. He was a doctorate from American University, Washington DC and taught international relations for sometime before returning fulltime to legal practice under VK Krishna Menon.

Though Sitapati holds that Appa's tenure as Vice Chairman of Law Commission under Vajpayee was a non-event, many would know that he was instrumental in the formation of Armed Forces Tribunals for speedy resolutions of increasing litigations in our military. The armed forces would ever remain indebted to him for it. ■

(The writer is a veteran media person and presently professor-chairperson, Vivekananda School of Journalism & Mass Communication, VIPS, GGSIPU, Delhi. The article was first published in The Pioneer)

RIP - MY FRIEND JOJO NAIR

—Commodore BK Mohanti
Shivaji, 1955-59

I deeply mourn the untimely sad demise of Air Commodore VV Nair, VM, on 20 September, 2020, short of his 77th birthday.

Jojo Nair and I joined PW RIMC in Jan 1955. He was in Ranjit Section where another illustrious friend Jojo Sengupta was in same section. VV was born on 05 Oct 1943 at Alleppey, Kerala. His father Shri Vasudevan Nair was in shipping and retired as the Chairman of Kerala Shipping Corporation. When I opted for the Navy, I asked Jojo why he is going to Air Force in spite of having nautical blood in his system. He in his usual banter said I can take all the salt from the sea but he wants to take to the skies.

He had a distinguished career where he held many important appointments.



His significant appointments include Command of 8 squadron in Tezpur. During his command, the squadron received the President's Colours, was rated the Best Categorised Squadron

(Supersonics), won the IAF Instrument Rating Trophy, and the prestigious and coveted IAF Flight Safety Trophy for being the Best Supersonic Squadron of the Year. For his outstanding leadership and professionalism, he was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal on 26 Jan 1985. He also set up the 17 FBSU in the newly formed Southern Air Command in Thiruvananthapuram. We met up in Thiruvananthapuram after three decades in 1984. He had also been the Air Attaché at Moscow. He held the appointment of Air One in the Southern Air Command prior to retirement on 31 Oct 1997.

Jojo Nair will always be remembered as a great friend and a cheerful, positive person, who radiated optimism. ■

REMEMBERING COL MM MALLICK

Col MM Mallick belonged to an illustrious family of Patna who have served the nation for two generations. His younger brother, Wing Commander Shahid Mallick was awarded President's Gold Medal as the all-round best cadet at RIMC, Dehradun and joined the Air Force in 1972.

The Colonel was born on 04th June 1945 and received his early education at St Xavier's School, Patna and subsequently at Prince of Wales'

Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he joined the 35th Regular Course at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun where he was awarded President's Gold Medal on commissioning in the 8th battalion of the Bihar Regiment on 27th June 1965. During his 23 years of chequered Army career, he has held important Command, Staff and Instructional appointments.

As a Major, he saw action during the 1971 Bangladesh operations in the Eastern



sector. His staff assignments include tenures as Adjutant of Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, and an Instructional appointment in the Infantry School, Belgaum as Directing Staff in the Junior Leaders Wing. As a Lt Col, he commanded the Corps of Military Police Unit at HQ 23 Infantry Division, Ranchi in 1985. As a Lt Col, he also raised an infantry battalion, the 21 Maurya of the Bihar Regiment on 20th July 1981. The battalion was presented its Colours by General K V Krishna Roa, then Chief of the Army Staff on 24th February 1982 at Danapur Cantt. On completion of its raising, 21st moved to

Palampur in the last week of June 1982 with Lt Col M M Mallick as its first Commanding Officer.

As a Colonel in 1987, he had a tenure as Training Battalion Commander at the Bihar Regimental Center, Danapur Cantt. He was highly regarded in the regimental circle for his professional acumen, integrity and moral courage. He was a keen sportsman and a golfer. In recognition to the service and the Nation, he was awarded Chief of the Army Staff Commendation card in 1984 by then General A S Vaidya, Chief of the Army Staff.

He opted to hang up his boots prematurely on 05th May 1988 after completing 23 years of distinguished military career. Married to Najmi Mallick, a wonderful host and a truly service officer's wife moving place to place with her husband. Mallicks have two daughters. Ayesha is married and settled abroad and Naveeda lives with her parents at their AWHO residence in Arun Vihar, Noida. ■

Editorial Team

Ashwani Kumar: Stern Yet Sensitive

Notes and memories from classmates and Coursemates

From Wing Commander Unni Kartha:

Ashwani was my class mate in RIMC (1962-66), couldn't make it to NDA, but undaunted and highly motivated, he joined Indian Police Service (IPS). A very soldierly alumni of NDC, he rose to be an exceptional and highly accomplished policeman, strict disciplinarian, god fearing, humble, abstemious spartan and man of unquestioned probity, rectitude and integrity whom I have ever met, a stern and conscientious tutor, a most diligent, involved and concerned supervisor and an awesome guide-friend-philosopher.

After the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, he fathered and nurtured the Special Protection Group, created to provide security to the Prime Ministers and their proximate family.

After he retired as Director CBI, having handled several high profile controversial criminal cases with sensitivity and due diligence, yet cracking the whip against corruption and crime, he was appointed Governor of Nagaland with dual charge of Manipur. After the



Cadet Ashwani Kumar in the centre, first term RIMC

political interlude, he settled in Shimla and fathered the HP University, of which he was its patron emeritus till his death.

To his old life-long buddies, who

remember him with affection and pride his, death is shocking and perplexing. May he rest in peace, having done his Karma well, far beyond the call of duty. ■



From Sh RP Singh, former Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad:

Ashwani Kumar was my batchmate. He was fittest cadet in police academy and in entire batch he achieved positions which could be envy of not only any IPS officer but of any bureaucrat, DGP of state, Director CBI or Governor. Was always cheerful and loving and my son

met him and his wife in Thimphu during our 73-Batch reunion in May 2019. He was as fit, cheerful and simple as during academy days. No airs that he was a Governor. He led the climb all the way to highest and steepest peak near Thimphu even though climbers included some young guns including my son.

Many of us had opted out. None of our group can believe that he will be affected by chronic mental depression so soon and not will be with us. In fact, we had put his name in Organising Committee for next reunion which was scheduled this November but now shifted to next year due to Covid-19. A great personal loss to each of our batchmates. Even his parting note is so sweet. An unbearable loss to his family. Probably God now needed his service. May our friend rest in peace in heaven. ■



THE LAST POST

Name	Section & Year in RIMC	Date of Demise
Brig Ishwar Dutt Vasishtha	1942-48 Kitchener	30 November 2020
Maj Gen VN Wadhwa	1953-57 Ranjit	
Mr Sajal Chakravorty, IAS	1967-68 Chandragupta	05 November 2020
Air Cmde Vasudevan Vatsalan Nair	1955-59 Ranjit	20 September 2020
Col MM Mallick	1957-61 Shivaji	
Mr Ashwani Kumar	1962-66 Ranjit	07 October 2020
Mrs Pushpa Khanna w/o Col KK Khanna		10 September 2020
Mrs Puspha Lakhera, w/o Lt Gen MM Lakhera		23 Jan 2021
Dr Narayan Madhav Ghatate	1949-53 Pratap	24 Jan 2021



At Home With the New GOC



The Rimcollians officers at Ferozpur with the new GOC, Maj Gen Sandeep Singh, a Rimcollian again, on 03 February 2021.

STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT

Lt Col Sukhjeet Singh (Shivaji), Col Gaurav Pathak (Chandragupta) Col Harshvardhan Singh (Shivaji), Maj Gen Sandeep Singh (Shivaji), Col Y R Singh (Ranjit), Maj Raghav Gupta (Ranjit), Maj L M Singh (Ranjit) Col Pradeep (Pratap)

SITTING LEFT TO RIGHT

Mrs Nivedita (w/o Col Harsh), Mrs Soni (w/o Maj Gen Sandeep), Mrs Sana (w/o Col Y R Singh), Mrs Yoshita (w/o Maj Raghav)

Rimcollians Get To Meet In Kolkata

A Rimcollian get-together was organised in Kolkata on 06 February 2021, an initiative of Col Jagmohan Brar, popularly known as James Brar



The Nilgiri Get Together



A Rimcollian get-together at MGM Resorts Wellington in January 2021 of the Rimcollians in DSSC faculty and the student officers of the 76th Staff Course

LT GEN MOHANTY, A RIMCOLLIAN, TAKES OVER AS VICE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF

— EDITORIAL TEAM



Lt Gen Chandi Prasad Mohanty on February 1, 2021 took charge as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, succeeding Lt Gen SK Saini. In a career spanning four decades, the officer served in numerous positions in field and highly active counter-insurgency environments.

Lieutenant General Mohanty becomes the second Rimcollian in a decade to adorn the office of the Vice Chief of Army Staff. The last Rimcollian before him to occupy the prestigious and strategically crucial office was Lieutenant General Shri Krishna Singh of the Gorkhas. Gen Mohanty is from the 104th course RIMC, Chandragupta Section, bearing college number 845. He was at the RIMC from 1973-78.

Lt Gen Mohanty was heading the Army's Southern Command when he was appointed as Vice Chief of the Army Staff. Gen Saini retired from service on January 31, 2021.

Lt Gen Mohanty is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College,

STOP PRESS

APPROVED FOR THREE STAR

- AVM SP Dharkar
- AVM N Tiwari

Dehradun, National Defence Academy (NDA), Khadakwasla, and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. He was commissioned into the Rajput Regiment on June 12, 1982 and has been decorated with the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Senal Medal, and the Vishisht Seva Medal till now, according to a Defence Ministry statement issued on February 1.

He commanded a battalion on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and later in the North East. He has the unique distinction of commanding two brigades: first on the Line of Actual Control and later on, the multinational UN Brigade in Democratic Republic of Congo.

He later commanded the Rangiya-

based division in a counter insurgency environment and the Sikkim-based Trishakti Corps immediately after the Doklam incident.

"The General officer also has a unique distinction of commanding two Administrative formations as well: the Jodhpur Sub Area as a Major General and Uttar Bharat Area as a Lt General," an official release said.

An alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Higher Defence Management Course, Secunderabad, and the National Defence College, New Delhi, Lt Gen Mohanty's staff and instructional assignments include an instructional tenure at NDA, Brigade Major of an Armoured Brigade, Military Advisor in Seychelles, Colonel Military Secretary (Selection) in the MS Branch, Brigadier General Staff (Operations) of a Corps in the Eastern Theatre, and Director General of Operational Logistics and Strategic Movement. ■

(With inputs from Ministry of Defence)

AWARDS, PROMOTIONS & NOMINATIONS

AWARDS REPUBLIC DAY 2021

PVSM

- Lt Gen CP Mohanty
- Lt Gen ST Upasani

AVSM

- Lt Gen AS Bhinder
- Lt Gen Nav K Khanduri
- Lt Gen Adosh Kumar
- Rear Adm V Srinivas

YSM

- Brig Arindam Saha

NM (Gallantry)

- Cdr GK Saini

VSM

- Rear Adm Sandeep Mehta
- Capt (IN) Kapil Bhatia
- Gp Capt Nitin Nayal
- Col Vedvyas Samal

TOP APPOINTMENTS

- Lt Gen CP Mohanty has moved from Pune as GOC-in-C Southern Command to Delhi as Vice Chief Of Army Staff.
- Lt Gen NS Bhinder has been appointed as DCOAS (IS &T)
- Rear Admiral Ajay Kochhar (116 Course, Chandragupta) has been nominated to take over the command of the Western Fleet.

PROMOTIONS

Navy

- Capt Vishnu Vardhan Reddy and Capt B Divakar promoted to Captain. They are from 101 NDA; ACC (PGM) and BCC (PSM) respectively

Army

Col to Brig

- Col Vaibhav Agarwal, Arty

Brig to Maj Gen

- Brig Sandeep Singh, Armd
- Brig CS Dewgun, 3 GR
- Brig Vikram Varma, Armd
- Brig Zubin Minwalla, 9 GR
- Brig Neeraj Gosain, Engrs
- Brig MPS Gill, Mech Inf
- Brig Aakash Kaushik, Raj Rif

NDC Nomination October 2020

- Brig Arun Ahuja, Int Corps, Shivaji

DSSC/DSTSC RESULT

COMPETITIVE

- Maj Raghav Swarup Gupta
- Maj Shaunak Nivargi

DSSC

- Maj Vivek
- Maj APS Randhawa
- Maj Abhishek Kumar
- Maj Roshnikanta
- Maj Tejas Deshpande
- Maj Abhijeet Patnaik

DSTSC

- Maj Shishir Shukla
- Maj Kalyanbabu
- Maj Anshuman Gairola
- Maj Vasu Banathia
- Maj Priyadarshi

Reserve List

- Maj Ishitab Vashisth

COAS Commendation (on Army Day 2021)

- Col Sarfraz Singh
- Col Rohan Falnikar
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