

Vol XV Issue-II (Bi-Annual) | September 2021

The Rimbollian

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

CENTENARY EDITION



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'RIMC embodies a century of Guru-Chela synergy and true Gurukul tradition' — **VCOAS, Lt Gen CP Mohanty**



EDITOR'S MAILBOX

कमोडोर सौरभ देब (सेवानिवृत्त)
अध्यक्ष एवं प्रबंध निदेशक

Cmde Saurav Deb (Retd)
Chairman-cum-Managing Director
Off. : 07325-222134
Res. : 07325-222126
Fax : 07325-222174
Mob. : 9493616900
Email : cmd@nepamills.nic.in



नेपा लिमिटेड (भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)
नेपानगर - 450221 (म.प्र.) भारत

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17th August 2021

My dear Sidharth,

I would like to convey my deep appreciation on receipt of the Newsletter which keeps us attached to our roots. I am looking forward for such wonderful compilation of news in the future too. Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for your kind action.

Warm regards and best wishes

Saurav Deb

(Commodore Saurav Deb (Retd))
Chairman cum Managing Director
Nepa Limited

Dear Editorial Team,

I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation for the fine edition of the Rimcollian magazine March 2021. The tales of gallantry by our Rimcollians are truly very inspiring and exhibit the fine training received at our alma mater.

I also wish to thank Sidharth Mishra and the Editorial committee for reproducing in this issue of the magazine the article in the Tribune (Chandigarh edition) written by Lieutenant General RS Sujlana (Retd) about my grandfather Prof Ram Chander Kohli. Ich Dien.

Capt **ARVIND KUMAR**
Shivaji, 1962-67,
arvindkoomar@hotmail.com

Greetings! I make reference to Col Priotosh Deb's letter of which lines 7 and 8 are quoted below:

'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.'

My objection is to what I have underlined and is in bold above. The ROBA Memorandum of Articles is very clear on its independent status with no ties of any description to any one exception made for Rimcollians. The Editorial Team has chosen to reply to the letter of Col Deb that the editors' have the right to choose what they like which is fair enough. Is it an oversight on the part of the Team to accept that ROBA is indeed an offshoot of the Indian Army or is it otherwise and that ROBA is sub - servient to the Indian Army. I shall wait for a reply and if my objection is upheld, I trust that in the next edition of the magazine a reasonable and unambiguous clarification which is necessary is published. Thank you for your attention.

—Flt Lt **AJIT SINGH**

Editor's comments— Thank you for pointing out the oversight. RIMC is a Cat A training establishment and considering its tri-service contribution, it should be placed under HQ IDS (as are other Cat A training establishments such as CDM, DSSC and NDA). Further, ROBA is an independent registered society and not an offshoot of the Indian Army as pointed out.

WRITE TO EDITOR
with your valuable feedback
robamagazine@gmail.com

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<p>President Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa (retd) PVSM, AVSM, YSM, VM Former Chief of Air Staff</p> <p>Secretary Group Capt Deepak Ahluwalia VSM +91 8872885558 deepakahluwalia2011@gmail.com</p> <p>Treasurer Maj (Retd) MS BEDI, SM +91-9810000222 msbedi@psbedi.com</p> <p>Honorary Editor Air Marshal PP Reddy (Retd) PVSM, VM +91-9868125008 robamagazine@gmail.com</p> <p>Editorial Committee Mr Chiranjit Banerjee Cmde NAJ Joseph Col Sanjay Kannooh Col Shailender Arya</p> <p>Published and Printed by: PROF SIDHARTH MISHRA on behalf of Rimcollians Old Boys Association (ROBA), Room No 16D, 2nd Floor, Wing 2, West Block 3, RK Puram, New Delhi 110066 Tel. No.: 011-32904426 email: robaoffice@gmail.com</p> <p>Concept & Design Sriav Creations sriavcreations@hotmail.com</p> <p>Printed at Om Printers</p> <p>Photo credit The cover photo & other pictures of the VCOAS have been taken by PIB accredited photo-journalist Sh Naveen Sharma. Other photos used in this edition have been sourced from various authors, old issues of <i>The Rimcollian</i> and the internet.</p>	<p>IN MEMORIAM REMEMBERING LN SIR 4-8</p> <p>TETE-E-TETE RIMC EMBODIES A CENTENARY OF GURU-CHELA SYNERGY AND TRUE GURUKUL TRADITION 9-13</p> <p>UPDATE A JOURNEY OF 50 YEARS: WAR MEMORIAL TO A MEMORIAL 15</p> <p>ROVING EYE GET-TOGETHER 16-21</p> <p>ARCHIVES A RIMCOLLIAN GIFT TO PRINCE CHARLES 22 UPHOLDING THE GUARD OF HONOUR 23 MY FIRST DAY AT RIMC 24 WHERE GENERALS WERE SCHOOL BOYS 26-27 THE SCHOOL TIE 28</p> <p>VISIT CENTENARY PREPARATIONS: GOC-IN-C, ARTRAC, VISITS RIMC 29</p> <p>NOSTALGIA FIFTEEN YEAR WAIT FOR CHAMPIONSHIP 30-31 CAS-EVAC MISSION IN NORTH SIKKIM: EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE TIME 32-33 BLACK FRIDAY 34-35 MEMORABLE EVENTS 36-37 A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK - ONE WHO CAME BACK FROM EDEN 38-39 FAMILY - BEYOND BLOOD 40-42 A ROAD TO RIMC 43-44 REMEMBERING GOLDEN YEARS 44-45 RIMCOLLIAN FOREVER 45 MY ENCOUNTER WITH RIMCOLLIANS 46-48 FALCONS OF CHHAMB 49 THE KANCHCHA SAHABS OF SIKAND AITE 50-53 AIR POWER AT TIGER HILL 54-57</p> <p>LADIES SPECIAL BREAKING THROUGH CLOUD TO LAND IN TIME FOR PARTY 58-61 MY EXPERIENCES WITH RIMCOLLIANS 62-63 MAKING OF A BOOK - ALSO A MARRIAGE 64-65 MY INTRODUCTION TO RIMC 66-67 MY ROMANCE WITH RIMC 68-69 GOD ONLY KNOWS, MY HEART WILL GO ON 70-71 BOXED TO GLORY AND BEYOND 72-73 RIMCOLLIAN AS MENTOR 74-75 THE ENDLESS SPIRIT OF ICH DIEN 76-77</p> <p>BOOK REVIEW RIGOUR: FROM A DIFFERENT PERCH 78-83</p> <p>POTPOURRI QUICK FLIP 84-85</p> <p>IN MEMORIAM THE SURFEIT OF LOSSES 86-87 THE ART OF HANDLING BOISTEROUS MINDS 88 MY FRIEND SUDIPTO 89 A EULOGY - COMMODORE THR IYER 90-94 THE LAST POST 95</p> <p>PROMOTIONS & NOMINATIONS 96</p>
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editor's note



Air Marshal PP Reddy (retd)
PVSM, VM

Dear Rimcollians,

In 1972, the Golden jubilee year I was in my 9th term in RIMC. I still remember the anticipation, the grandeur of the event and watching with awe the President Mr V V Giri, and luminaries such as Gen KP Candeth, Gen GG Bewoor, Gen PS Bhagat and many others. I heard many inspiring stories and glutted on the sumptuous food. I even managed to show off some of my paintings, executed under the guidance of Mr SP Bhatia and kept in the exhibition, to a young maiden who had accompanied her parents. And sure enough, I had to pay dearly for the pleasure by taking some beating in front of Ranjit section after dinner.

So, as the Centenary approaches, there is great anticipation once again. Undeniably, Centenary is a milestone worth celebrating as RIMC has contributed handsomely to nation building, not only by preparing young boys for a career in Defence Services but in the civil services and industry as well. We in the editorial team are excited and humbled by the responsibility bestowed on us to bring out the Centenary Volume, Calendars and the Newsletters. It is amazing to see how the old boys and more than them, the Rimcollian ladies have risen to the occasion and enabled us to bring out this bumper issue.

Tremendous effort has been put in by some of the old boys in researching and writing for the Centenary Volume, which will portray history and achievements of our brotherhood. It will be a collector's item and I would advise all Rimcollians to book their copy in advance through the ROBA office.

I would also appeal to all Rimcollians to take the lifetime subscription for *The Rimcollian* and you would assuredly get the hard and soft copies of the bi-annual newsletter.

We have lost many of our brethren to the Chinese virus and it is heart wrenching to read the long list of names in the obituary section.

Hope to see a large number of old boys and their families at Centenary celebrations.

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
C/o Rashtriya Indian Military College
Garhi Cantt, Dehradun - 248003



Email: robaoffice@gmail.com



President ROBA

Warm Greetings to all Rimcollians and their families. The year 2021 is more than half way through and we are standing at the threshold of our Centenary Celebrations. The global pandemic continues to wreck havoc with our lives and work, however the preparations for this significant event are continuing unabated. Forever resilient in the face of adversity, we assure to mark the 100th Founders' Day celebration with zeal and enthusiasm.

With steely grit, RIMC continues offline classes with physical presence of cadets, the staff and the entire administration round the clock, ensuring quality education and extra-curricular activities during these challenging times. Commandant & Team RIMC deserves special mention for keeping the edifice running with adroitness during the pandemic and ensuring that everyone is performing to their best. Lastly, my heart swells with pride when I tell people about the performance of RIMC Cadets in the recent NDA entry exams. 18 Cadets are joining this term, with 5 cadets making it in the top 10 in the NDA Merit list (4 in the first 5). Vive La Rimcollians! Congratulations to the Commandant and his team for this stupendous effort in these tough times. Living up to adage "When the going gets tough, the tough get going!"

As we are rapidly approaching the milestone event, the pace of the work is reaching a crescendo with unparallel enthusiasm and passion. I request all Rimcollians to share necessary details with ROBA Office and help in whichever way possible.

Heart warming Wishes to all Rimcollians and their families, with the hope to see you all next year at the mega event.

GOD BLESS RIMCOLLIANS - ICH DIEN.

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

Remembering LN Sir

Mr LN Thakur, who retired as section master, served RIMC close to 35 years. Post retirement he remained connected with the school. He passed away this June. The respects for Mr Thakur flowed in plenty, some are recorded here — Editor



Mr LN Thakur during his service years



Mr LN Thakur at the Founder's Day in 2018

It was a cold freezing day of early Feb 1984, when I had reached Dehradun to join the prestigious RIMC for the 124th Course. My parents had also accompanied me. LN Sir (Section Master Ranjit) was on leave that day and after completing all the formalities, my parents dropped me to the Ranjit Section junior dorm. As I was in the process of arranging my box/cupboard etc, we got a message to meet Mr LN Thakur at his residence. LN sir's dedication and commitment to the school was so much that in spite of having his daughter's marriage scheduled on the same day, he took time out to meet me and my parents. That was my first interaction with LN Sir and he spent about half an hour with us briefing my parents about the RIMC, which was followed by sumptuous snacks and sweets.

LN sir was a fatherly figure for all the cadets, but our course had a very special place in his heart. Lovekesh, his son, also joined RIMC with our course. I fondly

remember those umpteen visits to his bungalow next to PT fields to enjoy the hospitality of LN Sir and Sarla aunty. Courtesy my maths proficiency, he used to occasionally call me to his house on holidays for addition/compiling of the marks obtained by the cadets of junior classes. It was always followed by mouth-watering delicacies prepared by aunty.

Sir was a firm believer in the doctrine of "spare the rod and spoil the child". A strict disciplinarian who treated all the cadets like his own children and never hesitated in enforcing that "unsparing rod" on us for the much-needed course correction to our training. As the Prince of Wales in the inaugural address of RIMC in 1922 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," LN sir rightly moulded us with those "first few blows" to take on the life's challenges and beyond. He was an iconic figure in the history of

RIMC and played a pivotal role in ensuring that the old Indian tradition of "Guru and Chela," culture continues to be relevant in our school.

The school underwent some major changes in our senior terms. Our class continued to graduate to classes VI and VI A as 12th was introduced for the first time. The change of RIMC leadership from AEC commandant to Rimcollian commandant was another major milestone in history of RIMC. LN sir was the guiding light in steering the school towards these changes. Although Sir retired soon after we passed out from RIMC, but his association with RIMC continued lifelong and he contributed immensely in growth and development of the school even after his retirement.

Later during my service career, I had the opportunity to meet and interact with LN sir on numerous occasions. He also visited Defence Services Staff College, Wellington when I was undergoing 64th

Staff Course in 2008-09. He had a very sharp memory and could remember each one of us by our first name even in his late seventies and eighties. When I met him during the school re-union of March 2018, I never thought that this will be our last meeting.

He always walked tall and lived his life on his own terms and conditions. When Sir got hospitalised last month, I used to eagerly wait for daily bulletin from Lovekesh. When things had started

improving, the tragedy struck all of a sudden. While in hospital, he defied all odds and played his last innings extremely well. His battle with this serious medical issue while being hospitalised showed his courage in facing life's challenges with a smile. Despite the pain, LN Sir fought and stayed strong until the end. Unfortunately, he left for his heavenly abode on 16 June 21.

Being at LN Sir's cremation was so heart-breaking. When I saw Lovekesh,

lighting the funeral pyre at the cremation, the pain in his eyes was unbearable, but as a true son of a great father, he put up a brave front and went through all the rituals gracefully. I can't express how deeply tragic it felt. The fire soon engulfed his mortal remains into *panchtatva*. Truly it was an end of an era. Be at peace sir, wherever you are, and I am sure you will continue to shower your blessings on us. ■

— **Sumeet Sinha, 1344/Ranjit**

Mr Thakur, a True Guru



Mr LN Thakur being felicitated on the occasion of the Teacher's Day at RIMC in 2019

Whad I requested Mr & Mrs LN Thakur to visit RIMC on the occasion of Teacher's Day in 2019 to felicitate him as mark of our tribute. We picked him up from his house, received him at the auditorium took him through a special entertainment session followed by lunch in Cadet's Mess.

He was 89 then and refused to be given any assistance in walking, his stick made him as firm as he always has been. He stood tall at the podium delivering an emotional speech, we surely connected the present generation of Masters and Cadets with his legendary era.

Once he returned home, he wrote a letter and along with it came a cheque for

Rs 15,000 to get sweets for everyone. We honoured his desire by treating cadets with Rasmalai. What a blessing it has been.

While we feel bad for the loss, there is so much to rejoice for he would be still smiling from above with his soul at RIMC. ■

— **Col Vivek Sharma,
Commandant, RIMC (2016-20)**

A Master & A Mentor

Yes - a Master and a Mentor as some captured in our Camphor series. Truly a legend. Every visit to RIMC had a stop at Mr L N Thakur's house. And his hospitality has always been legendary even as a master - Milak (Mr Thakur being a Punjabi pronounced milk as milak) was a part then. And Ma'm's part no small measure. His eyes literally lit up every time we called on and in turn, we always returned Blessed and rejuvenated.

Time just passed as such was the excitement and exchange. Blessings for wife and kids were even more - and wives always treated like a *bahu*. In this last visit of mine in 2019 one should ask Anuradha (Mrs Peush Pawsey) on how he made her feel. Every time I spoke to him, he always had some words for Jenny



Commodores NAJ Joseph and Peush Pawsey with Mr Thakur at his Dehradun residence

and the kids, Itty specially. Always refreshing - I was hopeful that there would be a few more - alas the last two Rimcollian get together were cancelled and COVID preventing my lecture trip of July-August.

I am sure his impact is far more than any words - he has made a difference in my life for sure and he will live in all our hearts for ever.

— Commodore NAJ Joseph,
Ranjit/ 1977-82

A Master like None Other

We have lost one of the finest masters Rajwada campus has ever seen, as LN Thakur left us all for a nobler pursuit. LN Thakur would certainly be counted up there with the legendary masters of our times which include the likes of RC Singhal, RC Sharma, GS Bisht, K Kumar, SP Bhatia and a few others. He replaced GS Bisht as the Section Master of Ranjit Section in our second term.

Like a fine craftsman with an anvil, chisel and hammer, blow by careful blow, he shaped and groomed each one of us. He went about his job with so much passion and remained invested in his Cadets not just in the Academic block, but well beyond, in the sportsfields and even in the dormitories. I have seldom seen a Master so involved with his cadet's growth. He was unsparing when it came to correcting us for our shortcomings, and equally prompt in acknowledging and praising us for a job well done.

A famed glass of 'milak' at his residence was a much-cherished reward that we all looked forward to. More importantly, it was served with so much of love and affection. Together with his wife Sarla aunty, they made such a



LEGENDS OF THEIR TIME: Mr LN Thakur, Mr RC Singhal, Mr K Kumar and Mr VG Nene

hospitable couple, treating us like their own children.

Fondly known as 'Laniyo' within Cadets' circles, he has indeed been an integral part of our growing up. I was fortunate to keep meeting him whenever I visited school, and we regaled each other with memorable anecdotes about our times. It brought a sparkle to his eyes and

a smile to his lips, as he took immense pride in learning about the success stories of his fine finished products.

Go in peace sir. You have served your time so exceedingly well. You will be missed dearly by your Cadets, and that makes it a whole generation of them.

— Commodore Simon Mathai,
Ranjit/1981-86

A Toast To The Old Man



Mr LN Thakur with his disciples Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa and Vice Admiral Bimal K Verma alongwith Col Vivek Sharma, Commandant, RIMC

So our old man fell to Covid but not before he had waged a brave and long battle. His disciples across the globe prayed for his recovery, which was not to be, he being just a few months away from turning 90. But never mind, he fought well.

To those who were at School between the second half of the sixties and the end eighties, memories of LN would always remain with them. The coming of Mr LN Thakur marked a clear change in the genre of masters at the College.

A victim of the Partition, Mr LN Thakur, like the million others, toiled to find a foothold in independent India after they were uprooted from Pakistan. He was already 34 years old when he joined the College in 1965 but then had come up the hard way. He first joined the College as a temporary Master and then cleared Union Public Service

Commission (UPSC) interview to hold a permanent seat on the faculty.

Unlike most of the other RIMC Masters, our *Multan Ka Sultan* was not a Sahib. In his attitude, mental makeup and teaching methods he was more akin to an Indian Guru than a British public-school master. He had his own way of dealing with boys.

He kept a cow at his bungalow and every morning and evening he himself milked it. Whenever we wanted a helping of milkshake, we visited his residence after dinner. If the Ranjitiens won a trophy, the team Captain and seniors were assured a glass of milk at his residence. Some of the Sunday picnics he and his wife organized were memorable.

He never punished any student officially; that is, he never sent anybody for a pack drill or reported his 'sins' to

the authorities. He took corrective measures himself. In a letter he wrote sometime in the 1990s, he said: "I believed in the philosophy of *Ape Guru Ape Chela*. I had been a learner all through my life and that has paid me rich dividends. I shared with my students whatever little I learnt."

He learnt to play squash at the RIMC and played the game with the cadets till his retirement. He was a tough opponent on the hockey field and an athletics enthusiast. For a long-time he was Secretary of the legendary Dehradun District Athletics Association, and he organized the immensely successful UP State Athletics Meet in 1979.

His mathematics classes were never boring. He not only solved knotty problems but told in numerable tales of Multan, the city in Pakistan he came from, and gave narration of the novels he had read. And if

you dozed off, fireworks followed.

“I read novels to the cadets because I wanted to understand the adolescent bent of mind,” Mr Thakur had once mentioned. In his class he was the Lord and Master. Once the Commandant, Col GPS Waraich entered his class without seeking his permission. Though the Commandant was a real Tiger, Mr Thakur had the courage to tell him to wait outside. “Nobody is above the law and basic etiquette,” was Mr Thakur’s refrain.

Once I had to write an application to the Bank Manager and get it forwarded from him. He refused to sign and asked; “Why should you beg the banker to kindly do a thing for you? He is custodian of your money and he is doing no favour.” I must confess that I had not heard a better reason against the use of colonial English.

Mr Thakur was a person with his own mind. When we became seniors, we could see those at the helm of affairs were never comfortable with him. He would never toe the wrong line and let me assure you that he would also not keep quiet. He did at times have to pay the price for it but he was always happy and like a brave soldier he stayed put till the end.

The College honoured him with a Special Assembly when he retired in December 1989. “It was a great day, the first Rimcollian Commandant Col (later

Major General) SD Mahanti had taken over and my chela from Ranjit Section Col Prakash Singh was the Administrative Officer.”

His son Lovkesh, who was born on the campus, was at the College (Ranjit 1984-89) in the eighties. During his stay at RIMC he won 12 medals - a record of sorts! Lovkesh is currently a Captain in the Navy. Mr Thakur’s daughter is married and settled in Norway.

After retirement from RIMC, Mr Thakur joined the State Council of Education Research and Training as a Senior Lecturer in New Delhi. Thereafter he taught at the Delhi Public School, Hardwar and finally retired to live at his house in Dehradun.

WHEN I LAST VISITED HIM WITH MY WIFE, HE COOKED DINNER FOR US AS MRS THAKUR WAS AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE. HE THEN OPENED A BOTTLE OF BLACK LABEL, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT I DID NOT DRINK. “I KEPT THIS TO RAISE A TOAST TO YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS,” HE SAID AS HE POURED WHISKY FOR ME TOO. I COULD NOT SAY NO TO THE OLD MAN

Mr Thakur has a grouse, and quite rightly. He had said, “At the Platinum Jubilee there was not a word uttered about the Indian Masters who joined School and spent their life time on the campus But I am happy that the 75th year of the school fell in the 50th year of Independence, adding extra grandeur to the celebrations.”

My interactions with him became more frequent when I launched the Dehradun edition of *The Pioneer* in September 2007. I had persuaded the circulation department to give a free subscription to Mr Thakur. He was very happy to receive the paper but immediately wrote out a cheque. “*Bete ko chuna thode hi lagaonga* (will not bleed my son),” he had told the circulation boy handing over the cheque over a cup of tea. That was earthiness of Mr Thakur.

Around that time my daughter was studying at Kasiga School. One day she got a call from her warden that her grand parents were waiting at the school gate. She could hardly gather her wits to realise that her father’s teacher has come 20 kilometres riding a scooter on a hill road to meet her.

When I last visited him with my wife, he cooked dinner for us as Mrs Thakur was away on a pilgrimage. He then opened a bottle of Black Label, knowing full well that I did not drink. “I kept this to raise a toast to your achievements,” he said as he poured whisky for me too. I could not say no to the old man.

On asking him about his retirement, he had said, “I am spending my retirement happily remembering the numerous nicknames my students gave me. What’s a man without a nickname?” Many of us can recall the names with a slight jog of memory. For the Old Boys he once wrote a few line in Urdu:

*Door se maazi ki awaz aati hain;
Mustakil me mil zaati hain
Zammi aasman tak parwaz hain tu;
Mustakil ke liye apna hi andaaz hain tu*

(The voice comes from the past and mingles with the future. From the earth to the sky you are everywhere, you are an idol for the future). ■

— Sidharth Mishra,
Ranjit/1979-83)



RIMC embodies a centenary of Guru-Chela synergy and true Gurukul tradition

Lt Gen CP Mohanty (Shivaji 1973-78), Vice Chief of Army Staff, in a conversation with Sidharth Mishra (Ranjit 1979-83) on his life and times. The General gave interview in Rimcollian attire, complete with the tie, the cufflinks and the blazer with the handkerchief.



Lt Gen CP Mohanty, Vice Chief of Army Staff

Edward VIII, the Prince of Wales, on 13 March 1922, at the time of the founding of the school had made a very pertinent remark about nourishing the Guru-Chela relationship on the pristine campus. As we celebrate 100 years of the founding of Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC), Dehradun, the institution has served much beyond the limited charter of producing military leaders in the “the great British tradition”. It has given the country such military leaders who have helped India gain its rightful position in the comity of nations.

Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty, the present Vice Chief of the glorious Indian Army, is the current flag-bearer of the great tradition of the Rimcollian General Officers. Gen Mohanty, unlike the earlier generations, has risen to be high military position with no martial traditions in his family. This symbolizes the worth of RIMC as the premier military training institution of a fiercely democratic nation. Young minds from various parts of the country with hugely different social and financial background come together in the true spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood to achieve what they dream.

THE ODIA BOY

General Mohanty’s journey in uniform had a fascinating beginning. His father Jitendra Kishore Mohanty worked with the Odisha government and mother Sarada Kumari Mohanty taught Odia at SVM College at Jagatsinghpur. The senior Mohanty was posted at the local registrar office, where he met a gentleman who had



The General proudly holds a pencil sketch of him as a Cadet at RIMC, presented during his visit to the alma mater as VCOAS

come visiting for some work with his smartly turned-out son. Impressed with the demeanour of the young man, who was a Naval officer and had studied at a ‘military school in faraway Dehradun’, Mr Mohanty decided to send his son Chandi Prasad too to a military school.

The carefree boy who was then studying at Bagashai UP School was beckoned to take up the first challenge of his life, he was now preparing for the entrance examination of the Sainik Schools and the RIMC. “Destiny plays a big role, I failed the entrance examination of Sainik School and was waitlisted for admission to RIMC,” says the General, soft-spoken and affable. “We Odias are god fearing people and my father held a puja for bringing me luck, which since then has come in plenty. The first and foremost being, the boy shortlisted from Odisha to join RIMC did not and thus I landed at the school in August term 1973 but albeit in the month of September,” adds the General. The smartly turned out Rimcollian officer at registrar’s office

was Ketan Kumar Panda, a UN Jha medal winner at the school, who was to later retire as Commodore.

Having crossed the first objective, it was now going to be a steep climb at the RIMC. The General says, “Training at the RIMC was probably most grueling in my military career as that age with no background or thought about career-making in uniform, I sometimes found myself in a maze as I knew neither Hindi or English, having studied so far in an Odia medium school, and nor did I know how to tie shoe-laces.”

Here the legendary Guru-Chela tradition and the Gurukul brotherhood of the RIMC held the young Odia boy’s hands lest he slipped. “If I managed to live through the initial months trying to find my space in the school, without the communication skills, it was because of the venerable master Mr Laxmi Narayan (LN) Thakur and my dear course mate Kuldip Mehta,” recalls the Vice Chief.

Mr Thakur was a tutor in the true post-independence mould, with no hangs-up of looking and sounding like

the British masters of the yore. “He understood the limitations of a child from an Odia-medium school and worked on my strengths,” is how the General remembers his first mentor, who recently passed away at the ripe age of 90 but not before heroically battling the menace of Covid.

“As most of us Rimcollians find our buddy at the school, so did I find mine in Kuldip Mehta, a course mate and a fellow Shivajian (belonging to Shivaji Section). If there was Mr Thakur to mentor me during the class hours, Kuldip was there in the remaining time in the dormitory, on the playground, swimming pool everywhere,” says the General recalling the spirit which has been captured by some other Rimcollians too in their essays published in the Camphor series books.

“Destiny, as said earlier plays a big role. Kuldip joined the National Defence Academy six-months after me but we were together in the Bravo squadron. At the IMA, Kuldip had opted for the Armoured Corps but was allotted

infantry, and out of the 350 infantry battalions he landed up in 6th Rajput, where I was already there as a Second Lieutenant,” smiles the General.

Another incident which the General remembers with much affection is the cycle trip to Paonta Sahib and back. “The night stay at the historical Gurdwara, doing *sewa* (service) and eating in the *langar* (community kitchen) has been a life-long lesson in humility and service to humanity,” says the Vice Chief. By the time the Odia boy passed out from the school in 1978, he was fine in academics, playing for the college team in several games and winning medals at the prestigious district athletics meet. He crossed the second objective of entering NDA without much hassle standing 17th in the all India merit list.

LIFE IN THE UNIFORM

“Contrary to some perception, we Rimcollians do not live an insular life in the uniform. We are as much for our regiment and our army, as we are for our school. We enjoy affection of many who may not be from RIMC and as much enjoy mentoring young officers who may not be from RIMC. My career was shaped by two non-Rimcollian officers - Lt Gen RJ Noronha and Lt Gen VS Tonk. Both my battalion officers, who made me realise my true worth, taught me to set higher benchmarks for myself and guided me through the whole journey. Another officer whom I recall is Brigadier PC Das, who commanded an Armoured brigade, where I served as a Brigade Major” says the General, who is much proud to be the Colonel of the Rajput Regiment.

Gen Noronha had pointed out to Gen Mohanty about his poor handwriting and the need to improve it to qualify with flying colours for Defence Services Staff College. He took up the challenge, learned calligraphy and ended up being second on the merit list. Those who have been privy to Gen Mohanty’s notes on the confidential files would stand witness to his command over the art of hand-writing. Incidentally Gen’s buddy from school



The VCOAS holds forth on his journey in the uniform

Colonel Kuldeep Mehta too practices calligraphy.

“If you are from RIMC and you are serving in uniform you cannot escape the legendary school camaraderie. When I got married to Mamun (Mrs Mohanty is a trained Odissi dancer and has taught physics and mathematics at NDA as instructor), I was posted at Udaipur where we did not have an accommodation. We were given space in the house of Maj VP Singh, 2 I/C of 6th Rajput. While we had the master bedroom to us, his wife and daughter slept in the other bedroom and he slept on the sofa in the drawing room. For him a battalion youngster and that too a Rimcollian was son and his wife, daughter-in-law. A war amputee, he would motivate the battalion hockey team playing alongside. He initiated me into the bonding which a senior Rimcollian should have with a junior from the school. The other person was Lt Gen Sunil Jog, calm, cool and large-hearted, I have tried to model myself on him. And of course, how can I forget my Div O at NDA, Wing Commander Unni

Kartha and instructor at DSSC, Maj Gen Abhaya Kumar Gupta,” says the General, as he asks this fellow Rimcollian pen-pusher to rest his quill and notebook and enjoy some of the deliciously made snacks by Mrs Mohanty.

“I have a message for Rimcollians in the uniform. You are the best as you were the only one selected from your state to join RIMC. The school mentored you, as the Prince of Wales had said by giving those first few blows on the anvil of youth and now you have to mature yourself during the journey. There would be tough situations and if you are good, don’t give-up, don’t switch off. Bide your time, don’t get dejected,” is the General’s advise to the Rimcollian officers.

ON SCHOOL CENTENARY

As the school celebrates the Centenary in March next year, its matter of pride that there are several senior serving officers from the school playing helmsmen in the different services. “RIMC is a military institution,



The VCOAS, Lt Gen CP Mohanty with Lt Gen AS Bhinder, GOC-in-C, South Western Command and Lt Gen NK Khanduri, DG-OL&SM, his contemporaries from the school, releasing the March 2021 issue of The Rimcollian(Courtesy ADGPI)

whose *raison d etre* is to give quality leadership to the nation's military. Therefore, the celebrations have to be like a military function with the Supreme Commander of the armed forces having been invited to be the chief guest. We also must not forget, that commemorating 100 years is just not about a day's celebrations. It's time to add to infrastructure, prepare for the future and plan to justify our existence for the next 100 years. We should celebrate in a manner which helps this cause. Towards this end I have created a

committee under Lt Gen NK Khanduri with Maj Gen H Dharmarajan as his deputy. This committee, which has tri-service representation, is working with a vision in coordination with the school team led by the Commandant and the alumni association headed by Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa. Each entity has a role in this celebration which is as much of serving as of retired officers or such Rimcollians who are from the Civvy Street," says the General.

The said committee is coordinating with serving Rimcollians General

Officers and their equivalent across the country and through them mobilizing maximum participation in the celebrations. The Deputy High Commissioner of Britain accompanied by the Deputy Military Attache has visited the school as representative of the crown. On the question of Covid-related restrictions, the General says, "We would take a call closer to the celebrations and in harmony with the prevailing protocol within the Army. My thought is Centenary celebrations would only be starting in March 2022 and we should be celebrating it year-long."

Enumerating on his vision for the future of the school, the VCOAS says, "To retain our exclusive stature, we have to be a role model. We stand out because we send on an average 80 to 90 percent of cadets from each batch to the NDA. For the Sainik Schools to be like us, as the Southern Army head I had told the Sainik School principals under my purview that they would get Army Commander's commendation card in case they achieved results similar to RIMC. The Sainik Schools should take a cue from RIMC and have their serving alumni involved in the day-to-day running of the school, the kind of arrangement we have at the RIMC. Next, we have to plan to expand, create infrastructure for it and increase human resource to retain quality. We need to have both the quality and the quantity. We should also be ready to accommodate girl cadets when the National Defence Academy decides to open its gates to them. There are many Rimcollians whose daughters proudly don the uniform, and when the time comes, they would be happy to see girl cadets too on our pristine campus." The army has ordered works worth Rs five crores at the school for the centenary.

ON KEEPING FIT

The Vice Chief is known as a fitness enthusiast. While commanding the 33 Corp in Sikkim sector (under which falls Doklam), he visited each of the post motivating soldiers and officers alike. "Fitness is not just about being



The VCOAS with Mrs Mamun Mohanty

she was an instructor at the academy. Some of my Rimcollian cadets including alumni association secretary Deepak Ahluwalia would recall her contribution more than mine. While I was commanding Uttar Bharat Area, under whose command came RIMC, she ran a capsule for the teachers. She has complemented my efforts by her initiatives especially in meeting the social obligations like welfare activities, something which is so cardinal to a soldier's life."

ON RIMCOLLIANISM

"My alma mater has shaped my destiny. It has been the bedrock of my career. Hard work and destiny matter, I was happiest when I commanded my battalion but destiny had decided for a longer innings for me in the uniform," says the Vice Chief with all humility at his command. Though the whole narrative of his interview was an apostle for Rimcollian brotherhood but still it was worthwhile to have his definition of the concept.

"Difficult to define Rimcollianism in a sentence, however, it should be in the spirit of paying back to the alma mater, which has made us all what we are. However, *guru dakshina* (gratitude amount) should never be made part of a public discourse. We all want to do whatever we are capable for doing for our school, our service is our gratitude and our brotherhood our alma mater's mainstay." ■

(Photos by Naveen Sharma)

physically fit. It's also about mental strength. An operation at every level of leadership is judged by how you execute with minimum collateral damage and minimum loss to civilian life. This plan would need a calm mind. Whatever I could do during turbulent times in Assam or in Sikkim, which won me accolades, was because of my yoga and meditation sessions, something to which I was initiated into by my better half."

The General has no qualms in acknowledging the fact that his journey would have been incomplete without the support of his spouse Mrs Mamun Mohanty. "When I was a Div O at NDA,



The VCOAS in conversation with interviewer Sidharth Mishra

Gp Capt Deepak Ahluwalia VSM
Secy ROBA & Trustee
OIC Centenary Celebrations

Email : centenary2022@gmail.com
robaoffice@gmail.com
deepakahluwalia2011@gmail.com

Website : www.rimcollian.in

Mobile : +91-8872885558

Tele : 0135-2750995, Fax : 0135-2754260



Rimcollian Old Boys Association
C/o Rashtriya Indian Military College
Garhi Cantt, Dehradun-248003 (UK)



FROM SECRETARY'S DESK

Dear Rimcollians,

In a lot of ways, the work of a 'Secretary' is to look through the 'glass ceiling', onto the other side and to serve as a catalyst for change. I have humbly toiled to do so. As we move into the fast lane with the Centenary Celebrations, we need to shift gears and become more 'Action-Oriented' for the same. I urge everyone to work in tandem with the Centenary Celebration Committee (CCC) and co-operate with its members to mark the upcoming event as a Mega success.

Hundred years of existence could not have reflected more beautifully on the visage of this institute. The journey from a War Memorial to a Memorial, the recent physical changes to RIMC's landscape and the preparations towards the final celebrations sits with exquisite beauty and the College seems to be at its natural and physical best. One feels momentarily humbled to be a part of something so much bigger than one's self.

As I look back to the past year and a half. I am reminded of lines from Tagore's prayer "Where the mind is without Fear" –

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection.....

There could not be a more befitting description of the entire team of RIMC as our strength outshone out adverse circumstances. We set an example for the entire nation and continue to do so. RIMC truly is a cradle of excellence.

It is earnestly requested that each Rimcollian reserve their bed and berth at the earliest, as there is going to be a capping on individuals attending the gala event by 31st October 2021.

Looking forward to your continued association.

Warm regards & long live the Tribe

"ICH-DIEN"

*Yours sincerely,
Ahluwalia*

A JOURNEY OF 50 YEARS WAR MEMORIAL TO A MEMORIAL

— GP CAPT DEEPAK AHLUWALIA



EXISTING MEMORIAL



PROPOSED MEMORIAL

There exists a metaphysical line, which is iridescent and multi-hued, joining our past with our present which is best symbolized by the RIMC War Memorial.

Radiating a quiet majesty, it sits at the heart of the College, for each to notice and revere. Inspired by the style of the Kennedy Memorial in Washington D.C, the edifice has been crafted to perfection in the loving memory of those valiant Rimcollians who died defending the nation.

The circle of life brings un-canny coincidences. Unveiled on the 13th of March 1972 by the first Cadet Captain of the College, Maj Gen Hira Lal Atal, AVSM the War Memorial altered the landscape of the College for one and all to experience. Once again, as we partake in the historic Centenary Celebrations, the Memorial has been refurbished, synthesizing tradition with modernity. The journey from a War to a Memorial is a saga of painful loss and sorrow. Despite the fact that there have been no wars fought since 1971, we have lost our brethren in the course of CI Ops, flying accidents, border skirmishes and



PROPOSED MEMORIAL COMPLEX

many such incidents. Each loss has been mourned and remembered with an overwhelming sense of grief by our closely knit fraternity.

The emotion associated with the Memorial is one of deep homage and salutation to those brave hearts who laid down their lives for their motherland. The significance and memory of their lives necessitated the creation of this momentous edifice. On close observation, one can perceive the inherent symbolism at the epicenter of the design of the Memorial. It is one of a mother, cocooning what could be her child, signifying the purest bond of love, affection and

protection. Lives lost are irredeemable, the void created is permanent but as a symbol, they remain uncorrupted and immortalized in the annals of time.

This exquisite piece of architecture has been raised by the ROBA. Glass Reinforced Concrete tiles have been deployed for its flooring and a stainless steel cladding of hard chrome electroplated steel finish has been undertaken to embellish the structure with longevity. Inspiration from the 9/11 Memorial has also been woven into the refurbished edifice and the Remembrance Walls have been etched with croton steel and is empanelled with Acid washed frosted glass to endow it with adequate endurance. The note is solemn, the purpose is grave but it is accompanied by the honor and valour of those who died. These men have set the finest example of valour, patriotism and devotion to duty. Generations of Cadets will draw inspiration in the memory of these brave "RIMCOLLIANS". ■

(The author is Secretary, Rimcollian Old Boys Association)

THE MHOW GET-TOGETHER

— BRIG STEVE ISMAIL

Pratap, 1979-84

With three important Category A training establishments, Mhow is full of Rimcollians attending various courses. What with the Covid situation, socialising and get togethers have taken a hit, pretty much everywhere. I say pretty much, because the Infantry School has been a lone beacon of ‘Bubble-ized social life’. And all because this largest of all Army training establishments is headed by a Rimcollian! None other than the ebullient and ever social Lt Gen ‘Peru’ Ananthanarayanan.

He was away in Delhi attending the Reunion and ROBA meet there on the 13th March 2021, but had left instructions for a get together to be organised for all Rimcollians and ladies in station. The word went around and officers attending the Higher Command, Junior Command, YO Course and one very impressive Advanced Cyber Security Course at the MCTE, rendezvoused at the Infantry memorial just before 8 PM. We learnt that the JC officers were “cutting bounds” as they were not allowed out! Some habits never die.

After brief introductions, we all walked in and were warmly received by Gen Peru in an envy-invoking tee shirt with a larger-than-life Rimcollian crest, and his ever cheerful and warm wife, Mrs Aparna Ananth. Among the Rimcollians we also had Maj Sandhya Chaturvedi, ASC posted at the Army War College, who is the spirited daughter of Maj Gen Dev Arvind Chaturvedi, Ranjit, 105 RIMC Course.

Many of those present had not met each other before, so introductions were in order. In true RIMC tradition, we started from the junior most, Lt Kapil Dhiman, Chandragupta/ 180 Course. Each spoke briefly of his section and achievements in school. There followed the usual banter and reminiscences typical of Rimcollians and we all had a



Mrs Aparna Ananth and other Rimcollian ladies cutting the cake

wonderful evening with dinner laid out under the stars.

(Yes, of course, there were Scotch eggs!)

Gen Peru went over the happenings at the Delhi Reunion and shared the

decisions taken with regard to arrangements for celebrating our Centenary in 2022. It promises to be a grand affair, organised on an unprecedented scale. Long live the Rimcollian spirit! ■

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Sr. No.	Name	Section	Year	Remarks
1.	Gp Capt Gopi Mohan	R	1987-93	Attending HCC
2.	Brig R Sahatpure	R	1980-85	Instr JC Wing, AWC
3.	Lt Gen PNA Narayanan, SM	C	1975-79	Commandant Infantry School
4.	Brig SM Ismail, SM	P	1979-84	Cdr YO Wing, Inf School
5.	Maj Abhishek Singh	P		Attending Adv Cyber Security Course
6.	Col Sourav Narayan Dey	C	1992-97	Attending HC Course
7.	Col Surjeet Singh Tanwar	S	1991-96	Attending HC Course
8.	Capt (IN) P Nitin	C	1986-91	Attending HC Course
9.	Gp Capt Rohit Kapil, VM	R	1989-94	Attending HC Course
10.	Maj Eeshan Singh Dod	C	2004-08	Attending JC Course
11.	Maj Jaikant Mishra	S	2005-09	
12.	Maj Ligang Sera	S	2005-09	Attending JC Course
13.	Maj S Shyam	C	2005-09	Attending JC Course
14.	Mrs Savita Tanwar			
15.	Mrs Kalpana Sahatpure			
16.	Mrs Aparna Ananth			
17.	Maj Sandhya Chaturvedi	-	-	D/o Maj Gen DA Chaturvedi (R/1974-78)
18.	Ms Amoha			
19.	Mrs Ruhika Singh			
20.	Lt Mohit Bansal	R	2011-16	Attending YO Course
21.	Lt Vijay Chaudhary	S	2010-15	Attending YO Course
22.	Lt Kapil Dhiman	C	2011-16	Attending YO Course
23.	Lt Paras Singh	P	2011-16	Attending YO Course
24.	Capt Jarkop Doka	C	2008-12	Attending BSW Course
25.	Maj Maninder Singh	C	2000-05	Attending JC Course

REUNION PATNA CHAPTER — COL PREM PRAKASH

As the month of March dawned on the horizon there was hustle bustle in the social media about the RIMC Reunion. It was also learnt that due to the pandemic the Reunion would not be celebrated in school at Dehradun; instead the meet and AGM will be organised in Delhi.

Around first week of March a few of us Rimcollians discussed and decided to go ahead with organising one in Patna and accordingly informed all and spread the word around. Earlier we have had meets in Cobra Officers' Institute, Danapur and this time also we planned to meet over lunch there. The venue however had to be shifted to Hotel Regalia as COI was closed due to increasing number of COVID cases.

We went ahead with the meet and it was a great success. I must extol the exuberance and Rimcollian spirit at display at 99th Reunion lunch of Patna Chapter on 14 March 2021.

I must thank Satyajeet not only for working in close coordination but also for the USP of Rimcollian Lunch, the Scotch Eggs which was prepared by him and Mrs Satyajeet at home! Vanilla cake with Rimcollian crest was also there as



per tradition. We must thank Shashank and Anil who drove down 100 kms all the way from Muzzafarpur to Patna. Mr UN Singh, our revered Master was also magnanimous to grace the occasion. Dr Arun joined for the meet after ages; he is 1965-69 batch. It was heartening to hear interesting anecdotes and reminiscences from the elders and youngsters alike.

Col VK Singh, 1954-59, the senior most Rimcollian present assigned Shashank and Satyajeet the role of Secretaries to organise more get-togethers and Rimcollian meetings. The lunch ended with us savouring cassata ice-cream of myriad flavours, happy

memories and promises to meet again. ■

Rimcollians and Ladies who attended:

- Col VK Singh (Retd)
- Mr Mahaseth
- Col SP Singh (Retd)
- Brig HS Jaggi
- Col Anil Vashisth
- Col Prem Prakash, SM (Retd)
- Dr Arun
- Cdr Shashank
- Mr Satyajeet Kumar Singh
- Lt Col Shishir
- Col AK Rai (Retd)
- Mrs Shashank
- Mrs Vashisth
- Mrs Satyajeet

RIMCOLLIANS MEET AT MELBOURNE (10TH TO 14TH APRIL 2021)

— **GROUP CAPTAIN YADU DAS, Ranjit, 1964 - 1969**

We had heard about the Rimcollians settled across Australia and also shared a WhatsApp chat group, but this was the first time we decided to make it happen. To meet in person and share, our undeniable strong bond of brotherhood in Melbourne. After deliberations and even Zoom meetings, we decided on Melbourne being a central place for us to join in from different directions of Australia this year. Most of us decided to drive down, especially in times of COVID, finding it safer and more exciting. To top it all, Samir with his indomitable spirit, not only took it upon himself to organise the event but made it happen in style.



At Samir Shrivastava's house, 10 April 2021

It was like going back to our dorms. All of us who drove down interstate shared a huge luxurious house found on Air B&B. I am not sure how our neighbours of quiet, genteel Glen

Waverley coped with our vociferous group from early mornings' "Chai Chai" to late nights with "Up Up Shivaji" and the names of lesser-known sections. It was not only the ex-cadets, but their ladywives who, too, joined in this joyful commotion.

By the evening of Friday 10th April, we started driving in from Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra, checking out all the way how we progressed on the road. Rimcollians who got together for this memorable event were:

1. **Group Captain Yadu Das**
Ranjit, 1964 - 1969, Canberra
2. **Pradeep Bhardwaj**
Pratap, 1970 - 1974, Adelaide

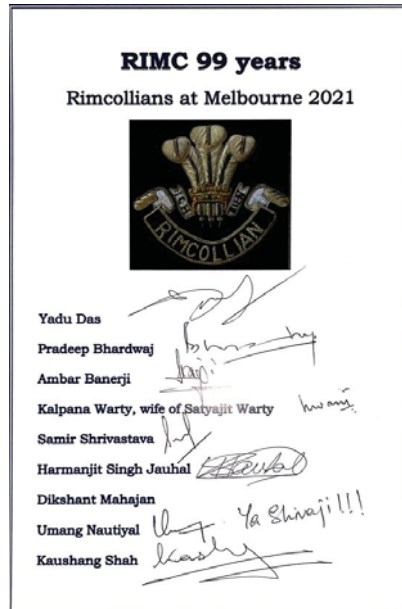
3. **Lt Col Ambar Banerji**
Shivaji 1972 - 1976, Sydney
4. **Kalpana Warty, wife of late Satyajit Warty**
Shivaji, 1972 - 1976, Melbourne
5. **Major Samir Shrivastava**
Chandragupta, 1976 - 1980, Melbourne
6. **Harmanjit Singh Jauhal**
Chandragupta, 1988 - 1993, Melbourne
7. **Sqn Ldr Umang Nautiyal**
Shivaji, 2000 - 2004, Canberra (on Staff Course)
8. **Kaushang Shah**
Ranjit, 1995 - 2000, Melbourne
Major Dikshant Mahajan, Pratap, 2001 - 2005 Canberra (on Staff Course), had planned to join us but couldn't due to unforeseen circumstances

We have two Rimcollians currently doing Staff Course at the Australian War College, Canberra. We all signed on a special card to celebrate this unique Rimcollian event on its 99th Year.



THIS IS HOW THE EVENTS ROLLED OUT

On Saturday 10th April, after a lot of back-slapping and hugs between us, having met after four decades or more, we were welcomed by Samir and officers of the NDAAAC or NDA Alumni of Australia Chapter at Samir's house for an evening to be remembered. Us - the men, ladies and children were one. Samir had cautioned his neighbours that the house would be on fire - pun intended, - so not to call the Emergency number. With lots of food made by Lalita and also by the NDAAAC members, and wine flowing, the evening continued into the early hours of the morning. Samir has a most friendly and energetic Kelpie who was continually kept in loving check by his happily willing daughter and son. We were privileged by



the presence of Kalpana and Rikain, wife and son of late Satyajit Warty, my former. They joined in with equal fervour. As one of the NDAAAC officers later commented, 'We all owe a vote of thanks to Samir for hosting not only the NDA lot, but an equally boisterous crowd of RIMCOLLIANS. To handle the RIMCOLLIANS, who are as noisy and celebratory as any group I have seen, is a feather in his crowded cap. Kudos to Samir and Lalita for opening their house to this noisy bunch!'

The following day on Sunday 11th April, the windy and rainy weather conditions did not deter us from going ahead with our plans to tour the beautiful views from Mornington Peninsula. By the time we reached Arthurs Seat at Dromana, the sky opened up for us to take in the majestic views across Port Phillip to Melbourne and beyond, while on the cable way and during our lunch on top of the hill. We then moved on to Sorrento on the seacoast, observing the beauty of Queenscliff and its surrounds, bracing the cold wintry drafts. After lots of photo ops we were now hosted by Harman and Gurjinder at their home for the evening, which was decided while on the move. Despite the very short notice, Gurjinder and Harman served the most delicious, home-cooked food in the warmth of their house. We cannot fail to appreciate the kind-hearted and self-effacing support

given by their neighbour, Twinkle. The evening was enhanced by the lively presence of Harman's three gorgeous daughters.

On Monday 12th April we took a trip to Yarra Valley. It was mesmerising, the beauty of the vineyards and the rolling hills. After stopping at Rochford Wines, we drove through the valley and had a bite at Yarra Valley Chocolaterie, while we absorbed a picture-book countryside before us. The same evening, we hosted a dinner for the Melbournians at our rented home. Once again throwing caution to the winds, with wine and tequila shots, our brotherhood indulged in a hilarious hullabaloo relating to Mr Nene, Mr LN Thakur, Col Johar, Col Waraich, Mr RC Sharma, Mr Singhal, Mr K Kumar, Mr G S Bhist, Golden Jubilee celebrations, clash of words between Sections (though Shivaji was everyone's envy), and not the least our iconic butler Thaple and groundsman 'Dhechoo' (Imdad Khan)!

Time was flying past, like a blip on our wonderful days. It was the last day for us together. The morning tea gong on a thali, with 'Chai Chai' being called out by Pradeep Sir, came loud and clear early in the morning. With the morning gup-shup across the ample dining table with the welcome sun pouring in, we made the best of the last morning together. We decided to visit Melbourne downtown. It was a drive through the city and then a Rimcollians lunch at Le Taj, which was an excellent cuisine we enjoyed. Though it was only a wine BYO, we had carried our own stock in a hip bottle. With a mix of Coke & spirit the lunch seemed even more delicious with the decibels rising as ever. Finally, a visit along the Docklands and to the seacoast along Battery Road was very memorable indeed.

Came the 14th of April finally, but not welcomed at all when we had to say farewell. Though the long road journey back to Sydney was ahead of us, we could not leave anywhere close to the time we had decided. The laughter and fun never eased whether it was about school or how good a husband Rimcollians always make. It was like leaving our families behind on returning to some far-flung operational area. ■

THE SECRET REUNION: 99TH FOUNDERS DAY ON THE LINE OF CONTROL

In recent months, there has been an eerie silence along the Line of Control (LC). But life does go on with slight variation - various tactical drills involved in day-to-day operations continue and each man here has to have his guard up to ensure that the sovereignty of our motherland is protected by all means.

This being the backdrop, the men in fatigues decided to have a get together to raise a toast to our Alma Mater at a place called XXX, located very close to the LC. Place and names have not been included for obvious reasons.

There was a youngster, who travelled almost six hours to reach the place, and the others travelled a little less but the spirits were high. The senior most Rimcollian of the area was not present but had sent in a beautiful cake to celebrate the event. He said; "The show must go on", and so did a few others, who sent in their juniors to attend the meet and some sent their good wishes. The constraint from their side was well understood. As the band of brothers met, it was gossip about our Masters, Mess, Coffee pudding,

dormitories, Benny (ever young), Tapkeshwar Mandir, cutting-bounds, Anandpuri, Kumar Sweets, IVA - VA relations and it went on.

The menu was carefully crafted to include the scotch eggs and coffee pudding. As the event came to an end, a beautiful gift was designed for all attendees, by a youngster. It was a horse shoe which signifies good luck to the tribe here in combat to brave the storm ahead. As we parted ways, it was a feeling that we all nourished from our school days. Viva RIMC. ■

Bay Area Rimcollian Get-Together (JULY 31, 2021)

— SANDEEP SINGH AND VIKRAM RAO



(Standing - Left to Right - Nagendra, Trishna, Mani, Dhruv, Pawan, Saurabh, Sonal, Tania, Bindu, Arjun, Upasana, Anurana, Vaishnavi, Arjun, Sheril.
Sitting - Left to Right - Sandeep, Maneesh, Neelabh, Bhaskar, Simran, Vikram, Andrea, Vibhore plus kids in the front row)

What began as an impromptu and informal plan for a get-together of a few Bay Area based Rimcollians, turned into a fully catered and amazingly organized event thanks entirely to the generosity and josh of our hosts, Mr. Arjun Israni and Mrs. Bindu Israni, who opened their home and hearts for all of us.

The event was held at the Isranis' home in Fremont, CA, in their expansive and meticulously maintained garden. Soon as we entered the garden we were welcomed by the delectable smell of a tandoor, the clink of glasses and joyous conversation, all framed by views of the beautiful

Fremont Hills and Mission Peak in the distance. There was even Mozart on the speakers (although to be fair, this might have been a bug with Microsoft clashing with the Apple Mac over Sonos capabilities ??!). Conversation flowed freely, helped in part by the libations - special mention to Anurana Saluja, who kept the party going with his famous recipe for "Dark and Stormy" cocktails. In true Rimcollian tradition, the celebration cake was cut by the junior most Rimcollian in attendance - Neelabh Mishra.

The Rimcollian fraternity came out in full force for the evening with approximately thirty six in attendance

with family, including a few that flew in from out of town - Sandeep Singh (Seattle) and Pawan Kapoor and family (Houston). It was truly inspiring to meet our brethren from every generation that have achieved leadership positions in Technology, Fintech, and more. A wide spectrum of technology, consulting, consumer companies and medical professions were in attendance. Regardless of their reasons for not continuing in the Armed Forces, these achievements are testament to the grooming we all received at RIMC for higher achievements in life! Thank you, RIMC.

Furthermore, it was heart-warming

to meet (and hear about) many of the next generation and see them on their way to even greater heights. As always, the Rimcollian spirit shined through with this event triggering the start of a pledge to raise funds from the North American Rimcollians for ROBA.

The evening came to its inevitable end too soon, but with renewed promises of more get-togethers and the refreshing of our unbreakable bonds. Chatter on the Whatsapp groups is leaning towards a gathering on the East coast or across the Canadian borders, which has sizable Rimcollian presence.

Rimcollian Attendees at Arjun and Bindu Israni's Celebration Party on Saturday July 31, 2021.

1. Sqn Ldr Anurana and Upasna Saluja. 1979-83, Shivaji. VP, Sutherland Global Services.
2. Bhaskar and Tania Ghosh, 1981-85, Shivaji. Oracle
3. Major Pawan and Simran Kapoor. Sons Param & Parakram. 1983-89, Shivaji.



Infosys. Visiting from Houston.

4. Lt. Sandeep Singh I.N., 1983-89, Pratap. Microsoft. Made the trip from Seattle to be at the Rimcollian Celebration.
5. Vikram Rao with Vaishnavi and two children. 1987-91, Ranjit. Managing Director, Guggenheim Partners.
6. Saurabh Chopra, wife Sonal, Shivi and

Sahil. 1990-94. Visa.

7. Dhruv Pilania, wife and son Mani and Aadi. 1994-99, Shivaji, Google.
8. Vibhore, Andrea and Ava, 1999-2004, Shivaji, Facebook.
9. Arjun Kantamneni and wife Sheril, 2001-2003, Intuit. Arjun is son of Lt. Gen KS Rao, 1959-63.
10. Dr Trishna Kantamneni and husband Nagendra. Dr Trishna is Pediatric Neurologist at UC Davis. She is the daughter of Gen KS Rao and came from Sacramento for the Celebration.
11. Neelabh Mishra, 2004-2008. Apple.
12. Maneesh Mahlawat, 1992-97, Chandragupta, Founder and runs his Mapping Startup.
13. Pankaj Sewal and wife Ileyana. 1968-1973, Ranjit. CEO and Founder of his Business Software Company.
14. Arjun and Bindu Israni, 1955-57, Shivaji, Texas Instruments. Host and hostess of the Rimcollian Celebration. ■

NEWS IN CAPTIONS

GORKHA BRIGADE CONFERENCE AT LUCKNOW



Five Rimcollian Senior Officers met at the Gorkha Brigade conference in Lucknow in Feb 2021.

- Brig HS Bainsla, 9 GR ● Maj Gen Alok Kacker, Col 9 GR ● Lt Gen PNA Narayanan, Col 8 GR ● Maj Gen JS Nehra, Col 4 GR
- Maj Gen CS Dewgun, Col 3 GR.

RIMCOLLIAN GET-TOGETHER IN KOLKATA



A Rimcollian get-together was organised in Kolkata on 20 March 2021

RIMCOLLIAN GET-TOGETHER IN TRI-CITY CHANDIGARH ON 11 MARCH 2021



GET-TOGETHERS AT NDA



Two get-togethers were organised in NDA Khadakwasla. The first Rimcollian get together was organised at NDA on the eve of 13 March 2021. Maj Nayan Ghildiyal, Sqn Ldr Kumar Gaurav, Sqn Ldr Prasenjit, Maj Suhel Kadu and Lt Cdr Yashpal attended this get-together. The Rimcollian Cadets at NDA have been bringing laurels to the College. In AT-20 all three major award winners were Rimcollians. NDA now has a sizeable strength of Rimcollian officers with 09 officers posted presently including the Adjutant.



The second get-together was organised in May 2021 by the Instructors posted there for the passing out course of Rimcollians.



DELHI CHALO



Moving to Delhi for Rimcollians on 13 March 2021 by car. On the way, the Rimcollians stopped and had beer and lunch at Karnal with Joginder Nehra, IGP. From left to right; Maj Gen PP Singh, Mr Joginder Nehra and Capt Arvind Kumar.

A RIMCOLLIAN GIFT TO PRINCE CHARLES

On a suggestion mooted by the Rimcollians in UK it was decided to send a gift of Rimcollian memorabilia to HE Prince Charles in UK. The gifts comprised of the video cassette In quest of Excellence along with the Book on RIMC Where Gallantry is Tradition, the Brochure, First Day cover and postage stamp.

A letter from **Lt Gen NS Malik**, President ROBA addressed to **Prince Charles, HRH the Prince of Wales**, forwarding these is as under:

10 SEP '97.

“Your Excellency,

The Rashtriya Indian Military College at Dehra Dun was inaugurated as the Prince of Wales ‘Royal Indian Military College on 13 Mar 1922 by Prince of Wales later King Edward VIII. The College paved the way for young Indian lads to become commissioned officers of India’s defence services; based on demands made by India’s nascent freedom movement for Indian officers to lead Indian troops. The RIMC was one of the first Public School of India set up on the lines of the Wellock College a feeder to Sandhurst, for imparting military training to a small number of carefully selected children. It has even now retained its characteristics of being a cradle of excellence, leadership and bravery.

On 13th March this year the College celebrated 75 glorious years of its existence. Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma, the President of India was the Chief Guest. In his Address the President said that, “It is gratifying to learn that, run on the pattern of first-rate Public School, the College has become a ‘Nursery for Officers’ and has made significant contribution not only to the our defence forces but also to other walks of life and can be justly proud of it.”



A number of Old Boys, both from India and Pakistan, attended the celebrations. Many came from other countries also including a few old boys and their wives from the UK who had passed out from the College during the 1939-45 war: the best known the Viscount Lord Slim, son of the Field Marshal Slim, being one of them. From Pakistan we had a galaxy of old boys who achieved prominence in Pakistan; Lt Gen Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, former Foreign Minister, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, former Air Chief, Lt Gen Gul Hassan, former Commander in Chief.

Hardly comprising 0.15 per cent of the annual officer intake in the Indian Defence Services, they have provided three Army Chiefs and one Air Chief in India, two Air Chiefs and one Army Chief in Pakistan; numerous Army Commanders, Corps Commanders, Diplomats, and top grade professionals in both India and Pakistan, over the last 50 years of Independence. The country’s first recipient of the Victoria Cross in World War II, 2Lt (later Lt Gen) Prem Bhagat, Engineers and free India’s

first Param Vir Chakra, Major Som Nath Sharma, Kumaon (Posthumous) were both Rimcollians. They have received numerous top awards: military, civil and sports.

The Rimcollian Old Boys, Association (ROBA) having carefully researched the past, produced a thoroughly professional video for the Jubilee. I am sending across a copy of the same which I hope you will like. I am also enclosing a book “Where Gallantry is Tradition”, a saga of the RIM College, the Brochure and the First Day Cover and Stamp taken out to commemorate this historical event.

The ROBA sincerely hopes that on your Royal Highness on your next visit to India, will do us the honour of visiting RIM College at Dehra Dun or agree to meet a number of our Old Boys in New Delhi or wherever convenient. distinguished

With our warmest regards from all Rimcollians throughout the world ■

Prince Charles
His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales
St James’s Palace, London - SW1A 1BS.

Upholding the Guard of Honour

From being selected to be part of a contingent to present a Guard of Honour to a dignitary to receive a guard of honour on visiting an establishment is a matter of pride in a soldier's life. At the RIMC such sense of

honour is inculcated at very young age, creating that desire in the young mind to be part of the guard to be inspected by the dignitary. During his visits to the school, Air Chief Marshal Birinder Singh Dhanoa always underlined the fact that

his journey in uniform has been from being part of the guard presenting honour to a dignitary visiting the school to receiving the Guard of Honour on visiting the school as the Chief of Air Staff. — Editor



MY FIRST DAY AT RIMC

I am yet to know what is being on your double, says Maj Gen TV Manoharan, five decades after he heard the phrase

This a true story. I was an innocent, small (really small) and raw boy of hardly 12 or 13 years when I landed in RIMC on a chilly winter morning. It was a like a dreamland with beautiful surroundings, fresh aroma of lovely grass and garden with mountains in the North and Mussoorie looking like a distant heaven.

Before I could even take a breath of such fresh air, I was shouted at by someone to take the luggage and run to Rawlinson Section on the double (even today I do not know what that double means). Before I could settle down; I was again shouted at to change into games kit (this time hurry-up on the double!) and report at the football field next to the classes.

I didn't know where the classes were and how to locate the football ground. Whomever I tried to ask they said: "Why don't you run around and find out Boy, can't you see I am very busy? (Later on, I came to know that reading a Pandy was supposed to be very busy!).

Since there was no other alternative, everyone being so busy, I started running and after wandering landed on a ground just when the game was about to start. What shocked me was as to how football can be played with hockey sticks? More shocking was when I realised that I have landed in the wrong ground.

Again, a shout, "Why didn't you bring your hockey stick?" Silence is golden, I remembered. Someone shouted five (5) rounds which I didn't follow because I thought it was not addressed to me.

The game started and since no one was willing to be the goal keeper I was told to defend the goal, which was twice as tall as me and four times as wide as my legs. To cut the story short my prayers were answered by God by sudden rain because of which the game finished.

Being the fresher and junior most I was again shouted "Oh! Boy! make sure you bring all the sticks on double. Before I



Maj Gen TV Manoharan standing atop the roof of the lead vehicle of Sadbhavna Car Rally held to commemorate Platinum Jubilee, arriving at the school on March 11, 1997.



Maj Gen TV Manoharan standing atop a chair to address a gathering of Rimcollians in Pakistan

could even see who ordered, the whole field was empty. In the rain, carrying 25 sticks running like mad I landed in the original football field which I was to go. Luckily the game was still on (I was later told that we must play football in the rain compulsorily) and no one noticed me running.

Ultimately, I landed in the section not knowing what awaits me there.

In those days behind Rawlinson's (Pratap) Section there used to be Wavell

section. The British boys had gone and the section was being used by us. As a special favour they had an open bathroom with 5 to 6 showers fully tiled but no doors, no screens, and no anything. Only the Seniors (so called) were permitted to use those Wavell bathrooms.

As soon as I came to the section, we the three newcomers, were ordered that immediately (again on the double), we should report to "Wavell Section" bathroom." We were also pampered that it was a privilege to take bath in that luxury bathroom on the first day along with Seniors. We felt elated and went there to enjoy a nice bath. However, to our horror we found that although there were only six showers more than ten seniors were splashing all over and all of them were in their birthday suits and nothing else.

Looking at them we realised why they were called seniors! This was my baptism by fire (or water) with the school and its alumni, with whom I was going to live for rest of my life. ■

(Major General TV Manoharan was in the school from 1948-52 and took pride in the fact that he was the 'shortest' person to ever have become a General Officer in the Indian Army)

WHERE GALLANTARY IS TRADITION



CENTENARY SERIES CALENDAR

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WHERE GENERALS WERE SCHOOL BOYS

— WILSON JOHN

This is one book which a Rimcollian wife will never read. She doesn't have to. She can cite every chapter and verse, so to say. Her Rimcollian spouse has seen to it that she knows everything about the Old Boys of the Rashtriya Indian Military College. A Rimcollian, if given a choice, will talk of nothing else. But then boys are boys even if they sport grey moustaches and polished medals and run the country's armed forces. And they have every reason to be proud of being part of the 75-year-old institution which is one of the best military schools in the world.

As a recent visitor to the school, I can say that the institution has everything an ideal school should have. It is set in a sprawling campus dotted with old trees and young flowering shrubs; white, spacious buildings overlook the Shivalik Hills at night, you can see an inky sky with stars shining bright and twinkling lights of Mussoorie

A glimpse of the campus life can be had at the morning breakfast in the cavernous dining hall. Three long rows of tables under a high ceiling. A door opens to a huge kitchen where, it is said, the fire never dies. At 8, the boys, ravenous after a two-hour session of PT and games, walk in and take their seats as waiters lay the table. Hot milk, cornflakes, slabs of butter and toast. And then comes the legendary Scotch Egg. Two each.

The Rimcollian folklore is incomplete without its Scotch eggs and chicken tandoori. The Scotch Egg has a special place. It is so rare a commodity that, an Old Boy said, there are Generals who drop in specially to breakfast on these hard-boiled eggs, rolled in a delicious mixture of flavoured minced meat.



Wilson John is a much-respected defence correspondent and defence strategist. He had visited the school in 1997 for media preview in the run-up to the Platinum Jubilee function and later reviewed the Platinum Jubilee volume - *Where Gallantry is Tradition: Saga of Rashtriya Indian Military College*, published by Allied Publishers

“THE MENU NORMALLY COMPRISED COLD CHICKEN, SALAD AND BYCULLA SOUFFLE. I NEVER TASTED BYCULLA SOUFFLE AFTER LEAVING RIMC. THEN AT TEA, CHOCOLATE CAKE, FRUIT CAKE, PASTRIES, SANDWICHES AND BRANDY SCHNAPPS WERE SERVED”

Lt General K Bahadur Singh, who studied in the college between 1923 and 1929, writes about the lunch and tea whenever there was a cricket match with a visiting team. “The menu normally comprised cold chicken, salad and Byculla Souffle. I never tasted Byculla Souffle after leaving RIMC. Then at tea, chocolate cake, fruit cake, pastries, sandwiches and brandy schnapps were served.”

Journalist Sidharth Mishra, an alumnus and one of the editors of the volume, says “if there was one place, I loved most at RIMC, it was the cadets mess. We specially looked forward to the Tuesday dinner for chicken roast and tipsy pudding. Monday breakfast for Scotch eggs. Saturday dinner for chole-bhature and Sunday breakfast and lunch -- paranthas and mutton biryani. The cooks also excelled in making kebabs, mutton stew, pancakes and lovely puddings.”

The boys relish the meal so much that there are often barter arrangements between them. A tipsy pudding, for instance, could be exchanged for four jellies with cream or six fruit custard. A pan cake for six eggs and a jam tart for two eggs. Bets are not uncommon either. Sidharth says he once ‘devoured’ 21 bhaturas to beat another student, Arvinder. “Our butler Bachchan Singh was on his knees that day begging for mercy.”

The college, in fact a school, offered more than mouth-watering dishes to young boys. It made a boy an officer and a gentleman. It hammered in a sense of pride. It instilled courage. It taught them how to face the world.

The idea behind the college when it was set up by the British was to train boys from prosperous Indian families to



President's Cavalcade at School on March 13, 1997

join the armed forces. It was then called the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College. Till date, the school has been faithfully following its agenda of turning boys into soldiers. There is a special emphasis on physical training. Every boy has to take part in the games, attend the morning PT sessions and of course, box.

Adventure sports like mountaineering and rafting are an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Academic subjects are pursued with equal vigour. The book, released on the occasion of Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the college mid-March, gives a bird's eye view of Rimcollian's life. Call it the Old Boys tales. The narrative is unpretentious and evokes a feeling of *dejavu* even in a non-Rimcollian. No one forgets the school days.

For a Rimcollian, the school is where he grew out of his shorts. And the Sunday freedom. The Welham girls. The crisp mornings. The love affairs.

IF THERE WAS ONE PLACE, I LOVED MOST AT RIMC, IT WAS THE CADETS MESS. WE SPECIALLY LOOKED FORWARD TO THE TUESDAY DINNER FOR CHICKEN ROAST AND TIPSY PUDDING. MONDAY BREAKFAST FOR SCOTCH EGGS. SATURDAY DINNER FOR CHOLE-BHATURE AND SUNDAY BREAKFAST AND LUNCH -- PARANTHAS AND MUTTON BIRYANI. THE COOKS ALSO EXCELLED IN MAKING KEBABS, MUTTON STEW, PANCAKES AND LOVELY PUDDINGS

The heart breaks. The cricket matches. The expedition. The hikes to Mussoorie. The punishments. The home comings. The bed in the dormitory.

Even after they become Generals and Air Chief Marshals, they don't forget the beds they slept on: the cupboards they had and the long queues outside the bogs with a brush in hand and a towel on the shoulders.

Like a glass of rum at the Reunions, the book will evoke fond memories in every Rimcollian. It will add to the punch to read the tales narrated here with embellishments imaginary and real. Have a laugh, feel a heart ache, go back in time. Phew what a life we had. They would thump each other's back and ignore their wives.

As one Brigadier said: "When we return to the school, we become boys again." The book will be an excuse to indulge in this fancy once too often. ■

(Courtesy -The Pioneer/ Saturday April 12, 1997)

The School Tie

— BRIGADIER CHANDER SINGH THAPA

The school ties are gradually becoming a signature dress code for the large number of television savvy Rimcollians who thankfully proudly display it with pride on their chest. It's so easy now to spot them displaying the tie, sending a loud proud message, "It's the arrival of the Rimcollian as an opinion maker."

A school's uniform is the most visible signature element of a school, it is a way of projecting the school before the public. As the old saying goes, "clothes maketh the man," so does the school uniform set a bench mark for itself. To see young smart children going around proudly and smartly in their school uniform gives a sense of joy to all, thereby setting a good reputation for the school. This is what the school children of today owe to the alumni of any school. The school tie therefore, is a lifelong companion worn on special occasions and occupies a place of pride as it silently hangs inside the cupboard.

The school tie thus gives a sense of belonging and identity to a person. Many school alumni proudly display the same, which is another source of identity in crowd. Proudly worn on certain occasions it gives a sense of oneness. It sends a silent message that we have a lot in common. The same masters, same environment, the same ethos and possibly imbibed the same qualities. Only a few public schools' alumni wear their school tie as much as we wear.

While for us it's a matter of pride, others argue it to be a snobbish behaviour. The truth lies in the eyes of the beholder. Those who wear their school ties do so as they are proud of their school or else why would they like to be identified with something that they wore in school. Though various types and designs of school ties has created some confusion.



The school ties by the have nots' is identified as a short cut leverage to success. What they forget that in today's performance-based world it might get you there but perform you have to in order to sustain. Therefore, those who use short cuts are invariably short changed.

The school tie is a concept of honour, and also an exclusive club but there is the other side of the divide. With economic liberalization and the system of education becoming more commercial and competitive the concept of the 'colonial' school tie may gradually die down. There is a popular joke that a man comes for an interview wearing all three famous ties of English schools, "Just wear your school tie" says the interviewer and sends him back.

The school as social mobility concept may be on its way out, as modern-day education has come with increased opportunities thereby increasing options, thus making a level playing field for all, which was always required. Those who serve in the

popular garment and business processing outsourcing sectors do not wear ties. In the corporate sector ties are just an accessory.

In our ancient education system young men stayed and learnt in Gurukuls. The boarding schools of modern India and also the ancient monasteries and madrasas in a way follow this system. The child's all-round development means character building. This is built through the *guru-shisya* relationship.

If we need education for the healthy development of mind, body and soul, the sense of alumni connect would exist and in some cases the school ties would reflect it. So, till, "unto death do us part," we will see more of the school tie in all walks of life for the betterment of the nation, a place where we have not occupied centre stage. ■

(The author was in school from 1968-72 and editor of The Rimcollian from 13th March 2013 to 11th March 2018, when he suddenly passed away.)

Centenary Preparations GOC-in-C, ARTRAC, Visits RIMC

Lt Gen Raj Shukla, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Army Training Command visited Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) on 6 April 2020. He was received at the school by the Commandant, Col Ajay Kumar. The General Officer was briefed about the school in detail and about the upcoming centenary celebrations. Gen Shukla also interacted with the members of the faculty and the cadets. Ever since the merger of the Directorate General of Military Training (DGMT) with ARTRAC, RIMC has come directly under the training command.



FIFTEEN YEAR WAIT FOR CHAMPIONSHIP

— AIR MARSHAL **DC KUMARIA**



I can recall that Pratap Section meeting, in the autumn of 1968 quite vividly even today. We were seated in ‘Bada Part’, celebrating our Section winning the Inter-Section Athletics Cup earlier that evening, which had brought us within the striking distance of the coveted Overall Championship that had eluded Pratap Section for over fifteen years. I was then in the final term, awaiting the release of merit list for joining NDA. The strategy decided was to concentrate on the Education Cup, which carried sufficient weightage to win the overall championship.

As the evening wore on, the conversation drifted to the spectacular new movie in town -The Blue Max, which many of us had seen at Capri cinema during the previous weekend. It was a World War I movie showing aerial dog fights in the romantic era of bi-planes and tri-planes. It had such an electrifying effect that everyone present wanted to be a fighter pilot! This made me cringe, for I too had wanted to join NDA as an Air Force cadet, but my father, with the connivance of our section master Mr RC Singhal had ensured that my choice was changed to Army. That evening made me more determined than ever, that I was going to be an aviator.

In NDA, that opportunity came in the fourth term, when three additional Air Force vacancies were announced. The downside was that there were over 60 applicants, and so the competition was tough. After a long drawn interview, covering Principles of Flight and aviation in general, I was granted change of



service based more than anything else on demonstrated enthusiasm.

It was a decision I have never regretted. I was fortunate to fly the sleek MiG 21, and later selected to train on Jaguar aircraft in Scotland. A coveted opportunity to train as a Weapons Instructor in UK, (akin to the movie Top Gun) set me up for what I thought would

be a long stint of fighter flying. But that was not to be. I was selected for a diplomatic assignment in Dhaka, Bangladesh as the Assistant Defence Advisor (Air). It was a difficult task as a young pilot to be assigned to fly a desk! Quite often the only way to take out one’s frustration was on the poor squash ball, at the historic Dhaka Club.

It was there that I met Mr Murad Abdullah- a big name in garment exports, who I was delighted to learn was also a Rimcollian. Through him I learnt of two more Rimcollians, Lt Gen Khwaja Wasiuddin (Retd) and Mr Zeaul Islam, a construction magnate. Gen Wasiuddin was a leading figure in Dhaka society, being a member of the Dhaka Nawab family. He was a Corps Commander during the War for Liberation of Bangladesh, and was placed under detention by Pakistani authorities. After repatriation, he served as the ambassador in Kuwait, and France. After retiring from Bangladesh army, he was the permanent representative at the United Nations. Now living in retirement, he was considered by many as a prime candidate to be the President of Bangladesh.

In March 1988, I hosted a Rimcollian get-together, perhaps the first ever in that country. As the evening wore on, stories of travel to Dehradun during term breaks were narrated. Apparently, a royal yacht was used to transport the young royal to Calcutta, before boarding a royal saloon on the Doon Express. Other Rimcollians were welcome to hitch a ride.

At the time of our meetings, India shared a lukewarm relationship with the



Standing L to R: Sqn Ldr DC Kumaria, Mrs Vaneeta Kumaria, Begum Wasiuddin, Mr Murad Abdullah, Lt Gen K Wasiuddin, Mrs Islam, Mr KZ Islam and Mrs Abdullah

ruling regime in Bangladesh, therefore, I recall checking with the General, if fraternising with an Indian diplomat would diminish his prospects of a future Political appointment. His reaction was as expected of a Rimcollian - he would not miss a get together for anything. A novel demand from him that evening, was for 'Pakistani Chai' after the meal, which was his staple. It turned out to be

lukewarm tea with salt, served with fresh cream (malai) - An acquired taste.....

On the professional front, in November 1988 there was a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm in the Bay of Bengal. It was expected to affect Bangladesh, and neighbouring Indian states with unprecedented severity. I had remembered that Indian Air Force had contingency plans for such an eventuality, and a small

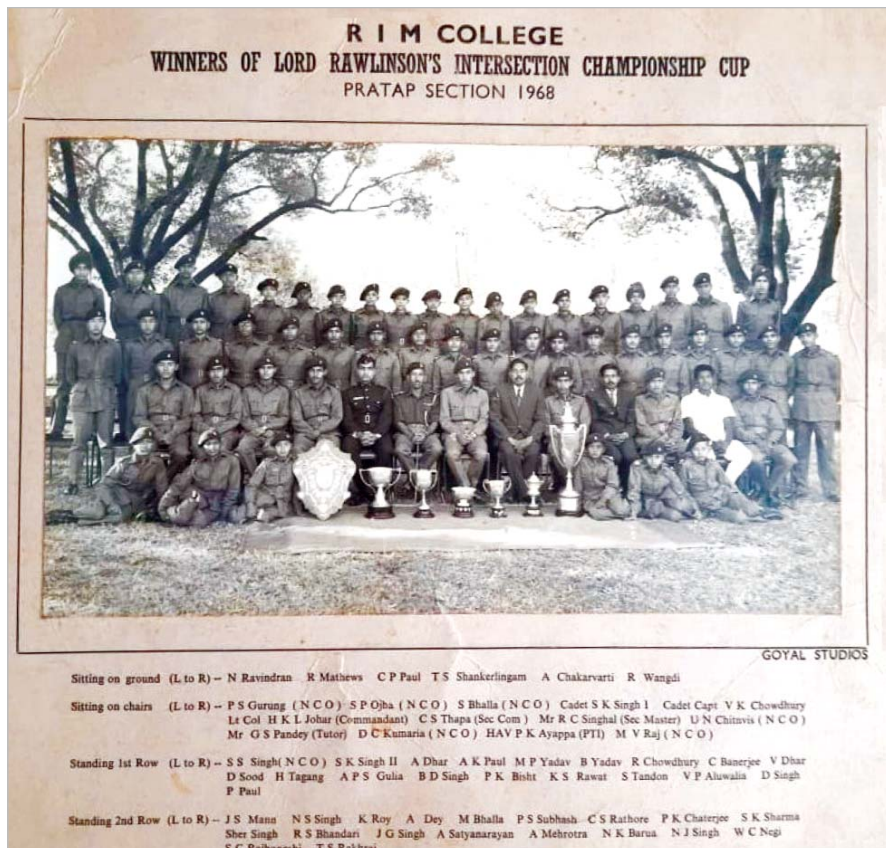
numbers of medium lift helicopters were kept on standby for relief operations. Taking advantage of a Rimcollian, Air Marshal N C Suri (later Air Chief) being the Vice Chief, I had kept him apprised of the impending situation. As events unfolded, Bangladesh was completely inundated. Their helicopters were partially submerged, and hence unavailable for relief duties.

The only country that could come to their aid was India. I recall, the SOS for help was received at our High Commission around evening time, and by next morning four IAF Mi-8 helicopters were landing at Dhaka, where only a small portion of the runway was above flood waters. The speed with which IAF reacted had taken everyone, including me, by surprise. The chain of events was narrated later by ACM Suri. He had used his good offices with the Prime Minister to keep him apprised that IAF could react with alacrity, should the need arise. Therefore, when the request went up to the PMO on MEA channels, the response was immediate. It may be recalled that this was close on heels of India's help to Maldives, and IPKF operations in Sri Lanka, and helped to cement India's neighbourhood policy.

Incidentally, I was on another diplomatic assignment in Italy, when in November 1998, I was to receive the first indication of Pakistani preparations for Kargil War, to be fought six months later. But let us reserve that for the next article of this series.

Oh yes, ... before we forget the beginning sentence of this article, back then in 1968, Pratap Section under leadership of late Brigadier Charlie Thapa went on to become champions after 15 long years. So, that evening in Bada part, Thapa having won a medal in athletics at national level was the Prima Donna, along with Salam Kiron, and Khyat Singh Rawat, who were also good athletes. All three were wanting to join the Air Force that evening. None did finally. A historic photograph of the event is enclosed. ■

(The author was in Pratap Section from 1965-1968. He retired as the Vice Chief of Air Staff)



CAS-EVAC MISSION IN NORTH SIKKIM EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE TIME

— LT GEN **BS PAWAR**



This article is dedicated to my ALMA MATER the RIMC which groomed me from the tender age of 11 years and developed in me the qualities of grit, determination and boldness which helped me in good stead during this life and death mission.

The Air OP became the Army Aviation Corps (AAC) on 1 Nov 1986 and I was fortunate to be part of this historical moment, as I had just been posted back to flying in Feb 1986 on promotion as a Flight Commander, after finishing my tenure as Brigade Major of a Mountain Brigade. The Flight was part of 659 Air OP Squadron (later 659 Army Aviation Squadron) equipped with Cheetah helicopters located at Air Force Station Bagdogra, near Siliguri. During this period, I carried out extensive operational flying in Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, landing at helipads as high as 18000 feet. Casualty evacuation was one of the key tasks of the AAC especially from areas of North Sikkim Plateau where there was no road communication with punishing climatic conditions - majority of the helipads were located at altitudes between 15000-18000 feet.

I would like to narrate one such casualty evacuation experience in North Sikkim which turned out to be a case of life and death for both the casualty as well the helicopter crew. It was dreary and cloudy Sunday afternoon with intermittent rain at Bagdogra, when around 3pm we got a call from the Corps HQ located at Sukhna, for the evacuation of a critical case of Pulmonary Odema from Giagong, located at 15000 feet in North Sikkim. Seeing the weather being marginal and time very critical, I decided to undertake this mission myself. There was a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in the Squadron of keeping standby helicopters, ground and



air crew for casualty evacuation missions 24x7 including Sunday's and holidays. It is interesting to note here that the Bagdogra airfield is located at an altitude of 415 feet, while we were required to operate at altitudes beyond 15000 feet, where the requirement of oxygen for the pilots was also critical - this was catered for in the helicopter itself with oxygen cylinders and masks located next to each pilot.

Also the weather phenomena in the mountains, especially high altitudes changed frequently and was not very conducive to helicopter flying after 1200 hrs. As per the SOP followed by Air Force and AAC for flying in these areas, except for operational and critical casualty evacuation missions, all helicopters were required to clear the hills by 1200hrs. The current forecast for North Sikkim was very gloomy but nevertheless an attempt had to be made, for it involved a precious life and was ultimately a matter of trust between the Aviators and troops on ground. We were airborne within 20 minutes of the call and after encountering intermittent rain and high velocity winds and having flown for 45 minutes, we were finally just 10 minutes flying time from Giagong - at this stage we were flying at about 13000 feet. This is when our luck ran out, with

the weather turning for the worse as we encountered heavy snowfall with the visibility dropping to almost zero. Due to the narrow valleys and poor visibility one wrong move could result in a crash with no chance of recovery or survival at that altitude, especially keeping in mind the prevailing weather conditions and sub-zero temperatures. At this point there was also a major danger of getting into a 'Whiteout', a condition that can occur when loose snow engulfs the helicopter, resulting in complete spatial disorientation, with every likely hood of a crash. The immediate reaction was to turn back and get out of this extremely dangerous and accident-prone situation.

Having turned back and after flying for approximately 10 minutes, while simultaneously descending to a lower altitude, we found that the weather and visibility was slightly better with the snow turning into light rain - the thought of the jawan dying however kept bothering me. At that moment there was a very serious dilemma and conflict going on in my mind on the basic issue of 'Flight Safety versus Life' and a decision taken either way could prove disastrous. I had been part of numerous Casualty Evacuation Missions earlier in this area with some

extremely challenging, but had never ever faced such a difficult situation of extreme inhospitable weather, which was extremely detrimental to safe helicopter operations. To add to our woes time was very critical at this juncture with just an hour of daylight being available to get out the mountains. I discussed the situation with my co-pilot, who himself was a very hardened and experienced aviator and we came to the conclusion that despite the adverse conditions prevailing, it was worth making another attempt. The very thought that if not evacuated the boy will no doubt die, made us do what we did despite the odds. We once again set course for Giagong and gradually started gaining altitude, keeping the helicopter about 50 feet above the valley floor which was white with snow and ensuring that we were not kicking up any fresh snow. At approximately the same spot as in the earlier attempt, we again encountered snow though the intensity was less and visibility a shade better - in any case there was no turning back now and it was akin to a do or die situation. The next seven to eight minutes of flying towards Giagong seemed like hours with anxiety and tension writ large on our faces, requiring frequent inhaling of oxygen - a disturbing thought that was lurking at the back of my mind was, 'what if the route back or the window as called in flying parlance closes due to further deterioration of weather'. What a relief it was when we finally spotted the Giagong helipad which had been prepared for the helicopter landing despite the heavy snow, but to our dismay there was no one at the helipad which is located slightly away from the Giagong Post - the Company Commander possibly had given up hope, in the knowledge that no helicopter could normally make it in this type of weather. However, the sound of the helicopter galvanised the Post into war like action and with the snow still falling, we were glad to see the boys hurrying towards the helipad with the stretcher. There was no time to stop the rotors and the co-pilot who had disembarked had to ensure the safe loading of the casualty onto the helicopter keeping in mind the danger



Lt Gen BS Pawar at a function as Commandant, School of Artillery, Deolali

posed by the running main and tail rotors especially someone walking into the tail rotor in view of the poor visibility - the casualty was a JCO who was unconscious and was on drip. Here I would specifically like to mention this incident at Giagong helipad, which illustrates the bond and the trust that exists between the troops on the ground and the army aviators - in all this flurry of activity and extreme weather conditions the boys offered us hot tea and basin barfi right in the cockpit. Unfortunately, there was no time to partake their hospitality with time being at a premium and we took off and headed back to Base hoping and praying that we could clear the bad patch that we had encountered on our way up.

Though there were tense moments when minutes into flying, the left side door of the helicopter suddenly flung open and the icy gust of snow and wind almost froze everyone in the cockpit. Fortunately, both the casualty and Nursing Assistant were adequately strapped up, which averted a major mishap. My co-pilot managed to get the door back in place and we heaved a sigh of relief the moment we saw the Lachen helipad located at an altitude of 9000 feet ahead of us - this is the logistic base for North Sikkim. Thereafter, the journey was uneventful barring the fact that we landed back, just when darkness was setting in, for which I had lot of explaining to do subsequently. All that became irrelevant when on landing the JCO who was unconscious all this while,

now stirred a little and opened his eyes - this seemed to be the immediate effect of being brought down to a lower altitude (from 15000 to 415 feet). What a beautiful sight it was seeing the expression of gratitude on his face and the tears rolling down his eyes. I held his hand for a few moments and got emotional too thanking God for being by my side in this grave and difficult mission - This was a very Poignant Moment in my Life and will be remembered always.

The JCO was taken in the waiting ambulance to the nearby army hospital and the crowning moment came when this JCO came to meet me in my office after ten days of hospitalisation and touched my feet in gratitude and offered me a packet of sweets - for him this was a second life. While the life of the JCO was saved and we were commended by the then Army Commander Eastern Command, two questions about this mission still bother me at times. Was the decision to go back despite the adverse weather conditions right and was it worth endangering two more lives and a helicopter when the prevailing conditions dictated otherwise. But when I think of the end result of this mission and expression and tears on the JCO's face, I feel it was certainly worth the risk. ■

(The author better known as Balli Pawar from School days is from the joining batch of Jan 1960, Pratap Section and was the boss of Army Aviation Corps from July 2004 to July 2006.)

BLACK FRIDAY

— LT GEN **NS BRAR**



Lt Gen Bikram Singh



Major General NKD Nanawati

In the evening of Friday, 22 November 1963, some talk of senior Rimcollians having died in an air crash started circulating in the College. The only source of news those days was the radiogram in the Senior Ante Room which gave out the assassination of President Kennedy, and that dominated all the news.

Next morning, during the assembly in the Convocation (Bhagat) Hall, the Principal, Mr SP Sharma, announced that Lieutenant Generals Daulet Singh and Bikram Singh, Major General Nanavati, Air Vice Marshal Pinto, Brigadier Oberoi and Flight Lieutenant Sodhi had been killed in a helicopter crash near Poonch in J&K the previous day. Generals Bikram Singh and Nanavati were Rimcollians. The previous evening's talk now sank home. In the summer of 1963, I had attended a wedding in General Bikram Singh's family and the loss had a personal connect. Twenty-five years later, on being posted to

Headquarters 25 Infantry Division at Rajouri, I made it a point to know about that disaster and visit the Generals Memorial which had been constructed near the crash site in 1980. Memories of a schoolboy came flooding back.

Last year on November 22, Finance Minister of Punjab, Manpreet Badal, unveiled a statue and laid the foundation stone of a library and museum in the memory of General Bikram Singh in his ancestral village Kahma, near Jalandhar. Lost in obscurity, this revival of his legacy triggered nostalgia among people and brought back memories of that Friday.

Lieutenant Generals Daulet Singh and Bikram Singh were the last of the graduates from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1931 and 1933 before the Indian Military Academy (IMA) was established at Dehra Dun. Major General Nanavati was among the early graduates from the IMA.

Lieutenant General Daulet Singh was

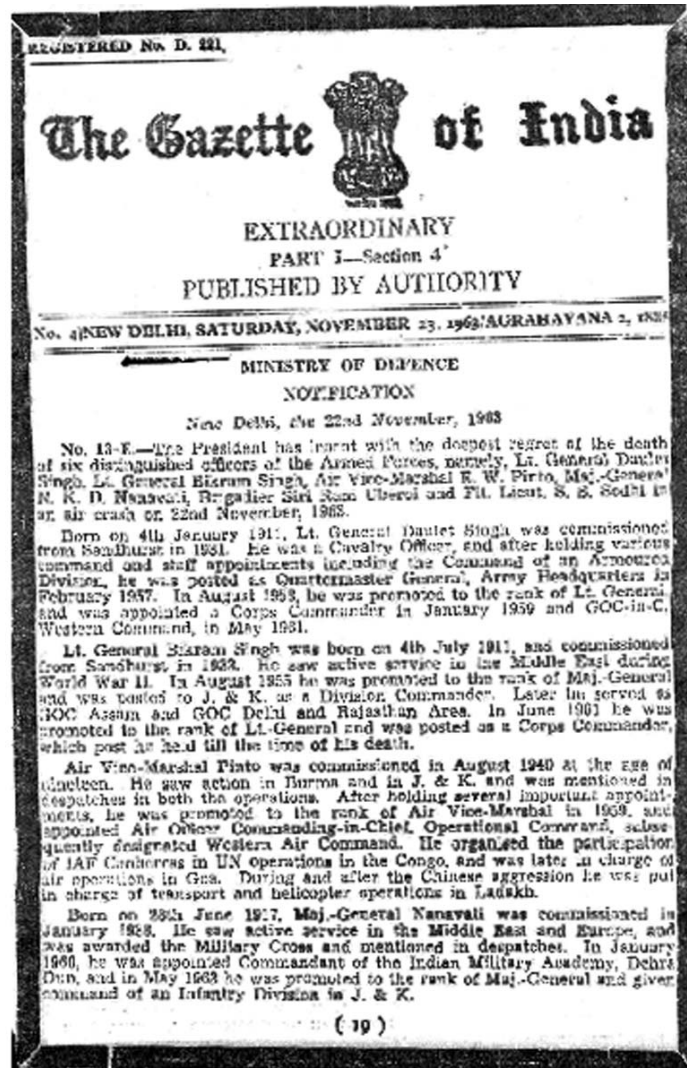
the General Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Command which in those days constituted the present day Northern, Western and parts of South Western Command and Lieutenant General Bikram Singh the General Officer Commanding 15 Corps, today's Northern Command. Forty-one years old Major General NKD Nanavati, MC had been the Commandant IMA before Brigadier PS Bhagat, VC and was the General Officer Commanding 25 Infantry Division. He was a rising star in the Army

Generals Daulet, Bikram and Umrao Singh (General Officer Commanding 33 Corps in NEFA and also a Rimcollian) were much respected in Army circles for standing firm against political interference and unrealistic directions in dealing with the Chinese before and during 1962. General Daulet Singh had firmly stated in writing "it is imperative that political directions be based on

military means". He and General Bikram Singh had opposed the flawed 'forward policy' in Ladakh. So had General Umrao Singh in NEFA. The general perception among the people was that they had saved Ladakh. General Bikram Singh was expected to become the Army Chief in due course. General Umrao Singh had been eased out and General BM Kaul brought in his place by raising and placing General Kaul in command of 4 Corps in NEFA. During the Reunion in 1962 and 1963 I remember General Umrao Singh playing the accordion outside the Senior Ante Room late into the night and the cadets singing along with him.

An old Air Force Sergeant, MP Biddappa, present at Poonch airfield that day recalls that the senior officers arrived at Poonch in a Dakota and Mi4 helicopter. An Alouette III helicopter from Srinagar was at Poonch since 21 September. After some discussion at the Poonch airstrip they decided to proceed to Jhalas on the south bank of the Poonch River opposite Poonch. As the helipad at Jhalas could not take two helicopters and was also dusty, they agreed to go in the Alouette. AVM Pinto took the co-pilots seat besides the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Sodhi, and the others boarded the helicopter.

Having completed what was scheduled at Jhalas, the helicopter took off in a westerly direction and then turned to fly above the Poonch River in an easterly direction. Then disaster struck. It flew into a pair of telephone wires strung across the river from a hillock 500 feet high on the south bank



and about 100 feet high on the north bank. Being grey coloured galvanised steel, the wires blended with the sky and merged with the boulder strewn river making it difficult to make out with the naked eye. The cables wrapped around the rotor head and the helicopter crashed about 800 yards away in the river bed.

The recently inducted single engine Alouette III (now called Chetak) helicopter of 107 Helicopter Unit of the Indian Air Force, taking off from about 3000 feet with six persons on board, and possibly fully fuelled, would have been hard put to gain height rapidly resulting in flying into the unseen wires.

Besides the three generals, the crash also claimed Air Vice Marshal EW Pinto, Air Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Air Command, Brigadier SR

Obero, MC, Commander 93 Infantry Brigade and Flight Lieutenant SS Sodhi, VM. Perhaps never before or since has a single mishap claimed so many distinguished and decorated officers in one go. And the Rimcollians lost two promising generals. Cables across valleys have been the bane of helicopters in the mountains.

Honouring public sentiment, General Bikram Singh was cremated at Jammu on the east bank of the Tawi River near Tawi Bridge. His statue stands on a roundabout at the cremation site and is called Bikram Chowk. In Jammu and Ladakh, his portrait can still be found in people's houses. The helipad at Northern Command Headquarters in Udhampur is also named after him. The citizens of Shimla erected a pedestal with General Daulet Singh's bust which stands near the Mall. AVM Pinto was one of the best known Goans of the IAF. Goa airport road was fittingly named after him. In 1980 a memorial - Generals

Memorial - was constructed at Jhalas on the south bank of the Poonch River near the site of the crash. An annual ceremony is held on 22 November at the memorial by the Army and Civil Administration to pay homage to all who died in that crash.

On 23 November 1963, the Defence Minister, YB Chavan, interrupted the Parliament proceedings to make an obituary reference to the previous days loss whereupon one minute's silence was observed and the house adjourned for the day. An Extraordinary Gazette recalling the services of those killed was also published on the same day. ■

(The author was in Shivaji 1961-65. Post retirement he served on the Armed Forces Tribunal, Chandigarh)

Memorable Events

— **ARJUN ISRANI**



This small narration for the Rimcollian Newsletter contains some highlights of my time in RIMC, Dehradun from January 1955 to December 1957. They are interesting stories, have been memorable and have had a profound impact on me over the years.

MR EARL J WATSON, HEADMASTER OF RIMC

Mr Earl Watson was the last British Headmaster of Prince of Wales Military College, as RIMC was known at that time. He retired on March 31, 1955 as Headmaster in my first term (starting January 1955) and Mr. Din Dayal took over as Principal from him. I was a good cricket batsman and a wicket keeper before I arrived at RIMC and had played cricket as a child like most young boys in those days. Mr. Earl Watson saw that I batted well and after observing my batting skills, asked me to come for batting practice and said he would coach me.

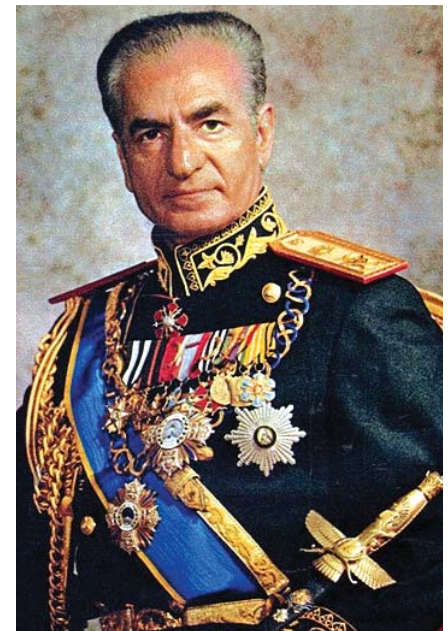


Earl J Watson

He cared to sharpen my batting skills. I was eleven and a half years old and was in my first term at RIMC. I was very excited to improve my cricket skills and was very nervous to be coached by the British Headmaster. He and I went to the practice area of the cricket field. He bowled and threw the cricket ball at me while I batted and hit and played the ball as I saw fit. He was very skilled at how and where he threw the ball at me to test my batting abilities. This went on for about half hour and he coached me how to do better. This went on for a few days and the impact it had on me was phenomenal. I was thrilled but nervous to have the privilege to be coached by Mr. Watson. Just imagine Mr. Watson's dedication to the quality level and skill development of his cadets (students). He was into personal 1:1 coaching. He was also a great science teacher and an awesome leader. Needless to say my cricket batting skills were honed and enhanced, thanks to Mr. Watson.

THE SHAH OF IRAN

RIMC, Dehra Dun was a showpiece for VVIP's visiting India. The Shah of Iran visited India and he came to RIMC with Queen Soraya in March 1956. I was selected by RIMC's Administrative Officer Capt. HS Mangain (Late HS Mangain retired as a Brig.) to be at the entrance of the Main Hall and to salute the Shah of Iran before he entered the Main Hall. I was in my third term and twelve and a half years old. I felt so thrilled and honoured to be there to salute and welcome the Shah. I was within two feet or so from the Shah of Iran and Queen Soraya when I saluted them and before they entered the Main Hall. The Shah in his Regal Uniform was very Majestic looking and



Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Shah of Iran

extremely handsome. Queen Soraya was absolutely beautiful and very elegant (subsequently the Shah of Iran divorced Queen Soraya to marry Queen Farah to get an heir to the throne of Iran). I can still see his smile and twinkle in his eye when I saluted him. So very memorable!

It was an inspiring experience for me, and it was indeed an honour. Subsequently the Iranian Press Squad took me aside to take a picture of me saluting the Shah. This was for a Press release in Iran for the people of Iran. A special thank you for late Brig. HS Mangain for recognizing me and providing me the opportunities that have impacted my life very positively.

EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I

As stated earlier, RIMC was a showpiece for foreign dignitaries making State visits to India. Visiting



Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia

RIMC was often on their itinerary. Therefore, Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia also came to RIMC in August 1956. Our Administrative Officer Capt. HS Mamgain again selected me for being at the entrance of the Main Hall for saluting and welcoming the Emperor before he entered the Main Hall. I was in my fourth term and thirteen years old. Emperor Haile Selassie I was a very dignified, solemn and a serious looking Emperor. I was privileged to be given this rare opportunity to salute and welcome the Royal dignitary. A special thank you for late Brig. HS Mamgain to provide this wonderful opportunity to me.

GENERAL KS THIMAYYA

On the Founder's Day of RIMC on March 13, 1957 then Lt Gen KS Thimayya along with Major General Sir Alexander Bishop (Major Gen Bishop, a Sandhurst graduate was from the British Army and was posted at that time as British Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta) and then Brig GG Bewoor (General Bewoor later became Army Chief from 1973 to 1975) visited RIMC on March 13, 1957. General Thimayya was already the Army Chief Designate and was to take over as Indian Army Chief on May 8, 1957 (within two months). The Old Boys and the young cadets played the traditional cricket match on this Founder's Day. At lunch, I was asked to sit next to General KS



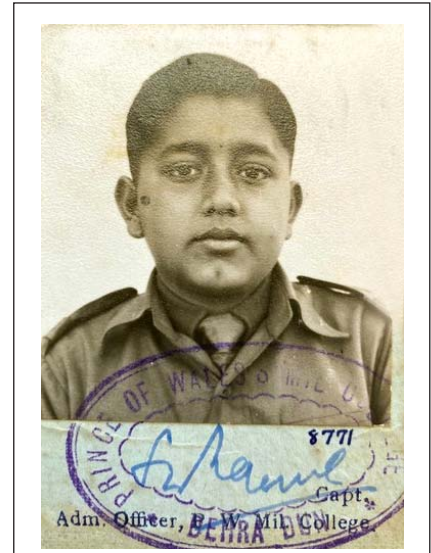
Gen KS Thimayya

Thimayya. I was 13 years old, in my 5th term and was the youngest member of the School Cricket Team.

General Bishop, General Bewoor were sitting close to General Thimayya at lunch. General Thimayya was exchanging pleasantries with them and me and during the meal was trying to have me pass the cutlets, which were on my right side. I was on the General's right side. I was nervous sitting next to the General and several dignitaries and did not quite understand or comprehend his request. I guess I lacked the etiquette and the nuances of fine dining. I was also in a daze and probably blanked out. Finally, he got frustrated at me and in his loud and gruff voice instructed me to pass the cutlets. Boy did I understand him this time! Of course, I was relieved and happy the ordeal was over. Being young and not skilled at table manners, I nearly blew that!

Never been happier when the lunch was over, and I could go back to cricket again! What a phenomenal experience and I remember all the intricate details even today after 64 years! General Thimayya was extremely nice to me after that mishap and complimented me on my batting! What a relief!

I have been living in the USA since 1969 and even today I sometimes meet people of Iran, Ethiopia and Eritrean descent and tell them my stories in RIMC.



Arjun Tirath Das Israni - The journey undertaken at the school from 1955-57

The discussion creates great rapport. As I reflect with 20:20 hindsight all the above real-life stories are wonderful memories of my time in RIMC and I remember them very fondly. I was lucky to have these extraordinary experiences and have the privy to history during my time in RIMC. My love and regards for the Institution are deep and profound. I am proud and privileged to be a Rimcollian! ■

(Arjun Tirth Das Israni was in Shivaji Section from 1955-57. He went to the civvie street and is settled in the United States)

A Tough Nut to Crack *One Who came Back from Eden*

— CAPTAIN **ARVIND KUMAR**



Humpty Dumpty had a great fall and all of his friends ensured he lives to tell the tale. Here goes yet another one. While flying a kite on 16 February 2020, I fell off a hillock in the new Chandigarh area while visiting a farm of a course mate from National Defence Academy. Landing on the road below with accelerated force on my hands with my full body weight of 110 kilogram. In terms of physics, it was Mass multiplied by velocity landing on the hard road below.

In an instant reaction I turned on my back. Friends came running to pick me up but I restrained them. Telling them to let me lie and requested for some cushions to be placed under my back. So far so good. Now I started evaluating the damage I had sustained.

Like a boxer hit by a sledgehammer blow, I found I could not take a deep

breath. So as trained I started taking short breaths. The pain of the injuries had not yet overtaken my senses. Finding I could not take a deep breath I knew that the lungs in the chest cavity were being obstructed from breathing by a rib. So, I continued to take short rhythmic breaths. By now I knew the damage would need hospitalization.

Lieutenant General Shankar Kumar Ghosh, who was constantly observing me, could read that from my face. My actions of removing the gold 'kadha' and rings and handing them over to him for further disposal, I guess confirmed his worst fears. He immediately requested Col Ashok Kumar Bajaj who had a car with chauffeur to be brought. I did not allow anyone to pull me up knowing that most injuries are aggregated when an individual is helped as an immediate reaction and forcibly lifted. I

then with assistance was helped into the car front seat

I knew that it is easier to get in and out of it than a rear seat plus it has more space through experience of taking my mother who is ninety plus in my car. Ensuring the safety belt was tied I requested the driver not to make the car bump while driving. The car door was closed and I tucked myself in great pain against the car door. Thanks to Gen Shankar's standing as a former Army Commander, Command Hospital Chandi Mandir and the Commandant were informed by him, the hospital was ready to receive me at the emergency department when we reached after about fifty minutes of agonising drive. I remember getting out of the car on my own but I collapsed. Next finding myself lying down on a stretcher with attendants trying to remove my clothes. I had the



Capt Arvind Kumar recuperating in the ICU of Command Hospital, Chandi Mandir

presence mind to tell them to cut them off instead of removing under garments knowing that removing them may aggravate my injuries to my chest. Thereafter I went into a coma.

Lessons I had learnt as a boxer from coaches right from the RIMC days helped to evaluate my injuries although the gravity was unknown to me at that time. I had nine fractures with all ribs on the right-hand side broken and three on the left-hand side broken with both shoulders (still under repair) and right wrist badly sprained.

Another Lesson I had been taught that a fallen person should not be lifted before evaluating his injuries. If I had been lifted when I fell my right lung which was already damaged by the fall the injury and the ribs would have got further severely aggravated. Lesson three, never say die. Lesson four, their most important: The blessings and good wishes of our loved ones works. Every day that I live I thank my course mates, friends, well-wishers and the dedicated doctors who cared for me so that I live to write this with deep gratitude on this friendship day (1st August 2021).

At one point around 27 February 2020 my condition was so serious that doctors told my sons and all my friends and relatives that it was a question of time before I kicked the bucket. So, my elder son told the doctors that as per my will all medical help and support be removed. But the doctor in-charge ICU said that that situation had not yet arisen and continued me on the ventilator and medicines through drips. In the morning I started showing some signs of improvement. But word went around that I had died and some friends send RIP messages on my coursemates mail group.

They profusely apologized when I got well and sent them a message confirming I was well enough to kick their butt. That same day learning that there was zero chance of my recovery some happy go lucky Charlie phoned the crematorium to book a slot for my cremation. The person



A fully fit Capt Arvind Kumar, on the day of discharge from the hospital. One can see the Rimcollian badge firmly parked on the coat

at the crematorium told him that they book slots for only the dead and not the living. The crematorium in-charge told him to hold his horses till I was confirmed dead.

All this while another NDA course mate, Col Tejinder Singh kept a close vigil. He kept all informed about my well-being. Many Rimcollians came visiting, including my RIMC coursemate Col Arun Mangain.

I can still recall some of the scenes when I was in ICU actual ones since I was aware totally conscious with eyes open but could not talk. The whole ICU was visual and I could see the door to all rooms. When there was an emergency doctors would rush into the patient's room one after the other and staff would also rush. After that if the patient would die the doctors would slowly come out and sit down totally collapsed in the chairs outside with some holding their head in their hands grieving for a while. Then the staff would come out. After a while the

dependents would come and the body wheeled out, with a priest offering prayers before this was done.

A doctor would then sit and complete the medical documents outside the patient's room. The room would be cleaned totally fumigated and made ready for the next patient. During my two and half months in ICU in bed totally I saw this happen four or five times.

I also experienced getting hallucinations and probably having brain seizures at the time. According to doctors I got two brain seizures. When I was getting hallucinations, I was not physically conscious but probably mentally active but totally unaware of my actual surrounding. It was like a healthy person seeing as if one is traveling on a bed with wheels in a corridor. On my left was a beautiful garden full of greenery and fantastic white and big pink flowers magnificent to look. On the

right was various food laid out -- pantries making excellent cravings from fruits so attractive and appetizing never before seen and very clean that I ask repeatedly to have some and also go down to the garden.

But I am told a firm no and the path closes. The passage is all white, pink and pineapple golden and very heavenly passing that path I am very happy and in a gay mood with no pain or sadness and all the while crave to eat the fruits and go to the garden but each time I am told NOT YET.

When we are not well, we see a doctor and when we get well, we thank the Lord, is the cliched saying. I thank all by precedence and leave it to them to thank the lord you lead followed by the doctors. I attribute all to the almighty, all others follow his will to do as he directs. ■

(Arvind Kumar was in the Shivaji Section from 1962-67 and joined NDA with 38th Course.)

FAMILY BEYOND BLOOD

— THOTA JAWAHARLAL



One more year and we get to celebrate 100 years of the school's history. A very memorable year and a once in a lifetime event, that we will get to see and attend. I recall my days as a First Termer, back in January, 1962. Just a little over 11 years of age and 4 feet nothing above the earth, hailing from Andhra, the temperatures in Dehra Dun, with the snow-capped hills of Mussoorie in sight, I thought I was at the North Pole. I could hear my bones rattle, in spite of all the layers of winter clothing, the great coat and sitting in front of the fireplace, in the ante rooms.

The ragging, the discipline, the training, it was all something that I took on with a pinch of salt. Needless to say and I admit, I used to bury my head in the pillow and cry my guts out before going to sleep. I soon overcame all that. And in my final term in 1966, I was the dormitory commander of middle dorm in Ranjit Section. It was my turn now, but I was labelled as a decent guy!!!!

In all the 5 years at school, I learned a lot. The training we got in RIMC, is not to be compared with any other armies, or the Navy seals. We were trained to be the future commanders, in the three services, the Army, Air Force and Navy. And we do have examples of outstanding performances and achievements. This was the primary aim of the school when it was founded back in 1922. NDA helped in inter-service understanding and finally IMA did the honing before we got our first star on our shoulders. When a soldier salutes his superior it means - "Sir I am ready to carry out your command" and an officer returns the salute by acknowledging that - "I will lead you till last breath". This was the ultimate



Thota Jawahar in his first term and final term

aim of the school. To train future officers. During our passing out, then Defence Minister Sardar Swarn Singh visited the school for a function.

With passage of time, those who preferred not to join the services, did other things and set examples and performed exceedingly well, in

whatever they chose to do in life. A great example is our brother, Late Ashwini Kumar. The credit goes to the teaching and training faculty, and last but not the least, our seniors, who made us strong, imbibed team spirit, brotherhood and the spirit of camaraderie. That most importantly,



Dec 1966 Batch with Defence Minister Sardar Swarn Singh



Visiting School in March 2016 to commemorate 50 years of passing out.

helped many of us achieve our dreams and do well in every field and walk of life.

Once we left the boundaries of the school we earned the irreplaceable badge of “RIMCOLLIANS”. That was clearly evident in the very First Term in NDA. A senior always came to the rescue of a fellow RIMCOLLIAN being bullied or ragged. Some of you will recall the RIMC corner in “Bhagat Hall”. It was the corner, close to the doors, which were used to escape the “ragda”, that the ACC / ACA decided to give after the movies. RIMCOS knew when to make an escape through the doors and make it to the mess for dinner, before the rest of the academy could haunch to the mess, huffing and puffing.

RIMCOLLIAN SPIRIT

I was posted in Nasik at the CATS (Combat Aviation Training School). This is where the officers, aspiring to join the Army Aviation Corps, come to attend the FINAL phase of training, before getting their wings and qualify as pilots. I was a flight instructor. I was part of one of the Air Op flights, located in Nasik. I was also responsible for the training of the flight pilots. One

of the pilots was due for a Route Check in navigation.

I decided to fly to Indore with the student pilot. In those days there was no GPS and all navigation was done with the help of the Million map. The date was 06 June, 1981. The average flying time to Indore was 2hr 30 mins. The endurance of the Cheetah (Alouette II) helicopter is 3 hr 10 min.

A Brigadier whose hometown was Indore and was posted at the School of Artillery, was on board. We took off and levelled off at 2000 feet AGL. Most of the navigation and the flying was being done by the pilot under check. I was just observing and cross checking. It was going pretty well. I then told the pilot, that I will not oversee the last 15’ of flying, and that he should do everything himself, including radio calls. I told him that I was not there in the cockpit and that he was all alone. The instrumentation in the helicopter was very basic. As such, navigation was of great importance. Catering for cross winds, identifying landmarks on the ground with those on the map and correcting where necessary in each leg of the route.

After a while I asked where we

were. The ATC of Indore was calling and asking the ETA. He said that a few minutes ago, he was supposed to see a railway road crossing and he has not seen it as yet. I asked him to follow the local lost procedure for the leg. Which he did and we spotted a railway station below us. At that point of time, I took over the controls and descended down low, so as to be able to read the name of the station on the platform. We identified and confirmed the name and steered the direct course to the airfield. By then the LOW FUEL WARNING light came on!!!! We had 15 minutes before the engine flamed out, due to fuel starvation. After a while we spotted the airfield and the ATC asked us to call downwind. I requested a direct approach to the dispersal if there was no traffic. I was cleared. I wanted to save on flight time in the air and have the aircraft down on the ground ASAP.

The dispersal was empty and I landed close to the ATC. The total flight time was 3 hours. The aircraft was shut down and I saluted the Brigadier and wished him a nice holiday. He asked me why we went down low, near the railway station. I told him that I was teaching the pilot how to identify his

location, in case he ever got lost while flying. He nodded his head and thanked me for the ride walked away. We then walked into the ATC and met the officer on duty. He said that Bombay FIR was worried, because we were overdue and that the matter was reported to my unit. I told him that I was teaching the pilot some procedures and that is why it took some time. We refuelled the aircraft and got airborne back to Nasik.

The return flight was uneventful. And we took only 2 hours 20 minutes. Looks like we had some tail winds to cheer us up! When I asked the Nasik ATC for clearance to land he cleared me and said, "There is a Red Carpet laid out for you, from the dispersal to the CO's office. He is waiting for you." I walked into the CO's Office and saluted him. He asked me what happened. I told him the truth: That we got lost. And that I had learned my lesson. He told me that the matter had already reached the Air Force Station Pune and that we may get some message from there. He asked me to be prepared for some repercussions. I did not know who the Station Commander was at Pune. A schoolmate was posted there. I called him to find out the details. He said it was Air Cmde NC Suri and that he was a RIMCOLLIAN. My spirits went up a wee bit, and I had a nice "Patiala Peg".

Almost 3 weeks later on 29 June, 1981 my CO and self, flew to Pune. I was in my NO1 uniform and was marched up to the Station Commander. He asked me what happened and I told him the story briefly. I ended by saying, "Sir, I have learned my lesson and being a RIMCOLLIAN, I will never repeat it ever again". There was some silence. And then Air Cmde NC Suri (Later Air Chief Marshal N C Suri, Chief of the Air Staff) said, "You are a RIMCOLLIAN? Col, march him out. Sure, he will never repeat it ever again." I saluted and walked out. My CO came behind me, tapped me on my shoulder and said that he was impressed with the RIMC spirit. He was expecting the worst-case scenario, losing my instructor status or a written warning the least. I walked off CLEAN!!



Air Chief Marshal NC Suri



Lt Gen K Surendra Singh

WOW!!! A CAPTAIN SITTING NEXT TO A GENERAL!!!! WE STARTED TALKING AND I INTRODUCED MYSELF. HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH MY CHILDHOOD DREAMS, MY BACKGROUND AND MY FUTURE PLANS. AND THEN I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF NOC

Ever since I got my instructor's rating in Dec 1980, I was planning to apply for my Civil Pilot's Licence. It involved some written exams and some practical tests. However, there was an initial hurdle. I had to get a NOC (No objection certificate) from the Artillery Directorate in New Delhi. I submitted an application through proper channels and it got turned down from the Divisional Headquarters. I would try again after a few months and experience the same results.

It was now into 1982. I had planned to attend the Diamond Jubilee

celebrations in RIMC, which were scheduled on 13 Mar, 1982. By then I knew that the Dir Gen Arty was a RIMCOLLIAN: Lt Gen K Surendra Singh. I cannot recall whether it was 12th or 13 March, 1982: One evening I saw Gen Surendra Singh sitting all alone on the steps of the middle ante room and sipping a drink. I walked up to him and introduced myself. He asked me to sit down.

Wow!!! A Captain sitting next to a General!!!! We started talking and I introduced myself. He was impressed with my childhood dreams, my background and my future plans. And then I told him about the problem of NOC. He asked me to mail him the NOC and that he would sign and send it back. I was silent for a while and then regained my courage and sheepishly told him, that I was actually carrying it in my pocket and if he would be kind enough to sign it. He looked at me gave a smile and asked how I would have his stamp on the NOC. I told him that I would stop over at his office in Delhi and get it stamped by his clerk. "Smart RIMCO. Give it to me I will sign". I had him sign three copies of the NOC. I have preserved one copy and laminated it as a souvenir. ■

(The author was in Ranjit Section from 1962-66.)

A ROAD TO RIMC

— AK PAUL

(This piece is a tribute to my dear friend Dhirendra Singh, Pratap 1967-72, who is no more with us.)



It is acknowledged amongst Rimcollians that an admission to RIMC is a 'passport to 'heaven on earth'. My son was no exception, when he stepped into this august portal on his 2nd visit, 1st was as six-month-old, in January 2008 and was overawed by its sprawling campus and sports facilities. He made up his mind to be a part of it anyhow. He appeared for the entrance test at the earliest opportunity in June but failed to make it.

I rang up my old Rimcollian friend Mr Dhirendra Singh, we lovingly called him the fixer. He directed me to take a one-way ticket to Dehradun with my son at the earliest, promising to meet us at RIMC. As advised by my guru we drove straightway to college and met the Commandant. We apprised him how eager my son was to join RIMC. After a brief chat he invited us to his residence for lunch and suggested we meet Mr SK Tyagi, who would guide how to score well in mathematics.

After a hearty meal, we met Mr Tyagi who advised us to procure 7th standard RD Sharma's math book from any bookstall in Dehradun. On our way back we bought the book from Saluja Book House but on the spur of the moment I went back to the shop and got a copy of 8th standard book also. After a vigorous grilling through both the maths books the December test went well as 30% of the sums were directly set from class 8th standard textbook.

My son got through the entrance test though an attempt to extract the outcome in advance from Commandant by Dhirender did not yield any result.

While we were waiting for the call for the medical check-up he started suffering from poor visibility. We visited a local clinic where the doctor who examined him happened to be a retired army doctor Colonel Shailesh Kumar. To our dismay he



Author with his coursemate Dhirendra Singh (right) at an annual alumni meet

turned out to be short sighted with a power -2.50 whereas RIMC standard is -1.25- a figure always haunted me.

The Colonel on realizing how desperate the boy was to join army (though Dhirender and I had different intention) assured us a fit certificate as he knew the Shillong MH doctor personally. We heaved a sigh of relief and thought our anxiety was over. But that was not to be as the eye doctor was posted out; so Shillong MH advised us to go for a check up to 151 Base Hospital Guwahati. We immediately conveyed this to Colonel Shailesh Kumar who again assured us that Colonel Rahul Phookan, the Guwahati MH doctor was a family friend and there would be no problem. Before we left for Guwahati Col Kumar did talk to Col. Phookan but he turned out to be a stickler for rules.

He carried out the check up in the morning but ordered us to come back in the evening. After a whole day's wait, we slipped into his cabin confidently and found him sitting on his desk with a dog-eared curled up soiled piece of paper, as

we entered he signalled me to his desk and shoved the paper at me and asked for a close look at it. I did not have to- again- 1.25! We were literally thrown out after some dressing down; "Army will be full of unfit soldiers if I entertain such cases."

With moist eyes we started driving home. On my way I consoled my son saying with great friend like Dhirender by our side we could try for admission to any good public school, may be Doon School or Mayo College; my friend assured an entry to any of them. My son was not impressed.

On being informed that a new ophthalmologist had arrived, we rushed to MH Shillong for an appointment as the deadline was nearing. On the appointed day, we went early morning and started loitering around the solitary bungalow where the eye clinic is situated. A would be Rimcollian instinct led my son to its door, he elbowed it slightly, it was ajar. We quietly sneaked into chamber and I asked my son to memorise last two rows of Snellen chart, but he chose to scribble

>>TURN ON PAGE 44

REMEMBERING GOLDEN YEARS

— **BALAJI KARTHA**



When Sidharth announced in the Egroup that he was looking for stories for the centenary edition of this wonderful periodical, I thought I should share my experiences of another grand get-together that shaped my perception of this school; the Golden Jubilee in 1972

I was a 3rd term and for a small made 12-year-old, watching the 3 helicopters land on the field opposite Pratap Section was awesome (three of the GOC-in-Cs of the four army commands of that time were our old boys!). Apart from that, for that occasion, I was also the proud guide to a new cadet's dad and showing him around the school and watching so many brass walking around us filled our chests with pleasure

To give the back-story of who my guest was - I came from a small steel town, in the old Madhya Pradesh, of Bhilai. After my 1st term, when I went back for the winter vacation of 1969, I



President VV Giri addressing the College during the Golden Jubilee celebrations. (From Left) Lt Gen PS Bhagat, Lt Col HKL Johar (Commandant), Lt Gen (later Gen) GG Bewoor and Lt Gen KP Candeth

was thinking I had already joined the Indian Army and was full of bluster swagger! A few days after I was home, we had some visitors - another Malayalee

family (there were not many Malayalee families there) - and in came three kids

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them on his palm. Before he could jot down the last row, the JCO in charge peeped in and directed us to the visitor's room. So hard luck and that might be the end of road to RIMC we thought.

Armed with all rows but the last on the chart my son made his entry in doctor's chamber. The young Major was stern and uncommunicative. He asked my son to read the chart completely, as expected he got stuck in the last line but read the second last with ease since he had already digested them while sitting in visitor's room. The doctor told he needed specs and his power was -2.25. He was doubtful of his fitness; he put few

eyes drops on his eyes and asked him to wait outside. We could hear Major calling several of his colleagues for RIMC eye standards. Realising the gravity of the situation I called up good Samaritan doctor Kumar and narrated the ongoing happenings. He assured me he already had a talk with Major in the morning but I was not convinced.

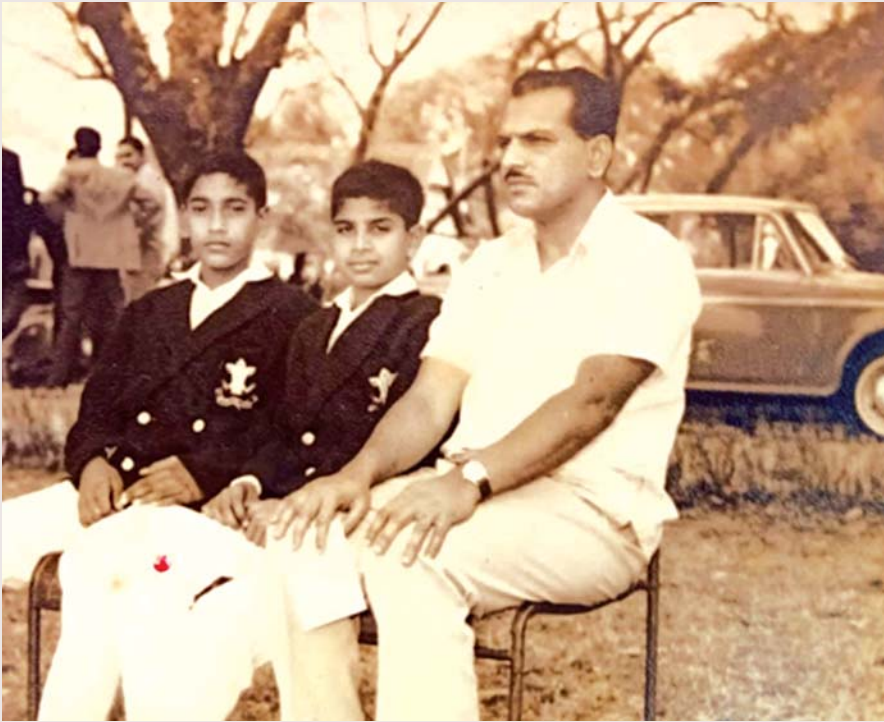
After sometime we could hear Dr Kumar's voice at the other end, it was certainly about that damn standard. The Major called him to his cabin and asked him to read out all the alphabet in the chart again after giving it a good round of spin. Lo! as fortune would have it, it came

to a halt refusing to budge an inch from its earlier spot. He had no choice but to blurt out what was in his stomach. The doctor declared him fit with -2.25! All his ill-informed sources probably gave him NDA standard.

He joined RIMC without any further ado but until today we do not know whose sleight of hand worked, all we knew Dhirender was wielding his magic wand from behind the scene all through. Now my son, Orkhodip Paul, Shivaji 2009-14, is serving 3 Kumaon Regiment proudly. ■

(The author was in Pratap Section from 1967-72. After school, he went to the civvie street)

FROM PAGE 44



First term cadets Bimal Kumar Verma and C Hari Kumar with Hari Kumar's father

with them. One was a fellow around my age, then a small guy (around 9 years old) hanging shyly behind him and a little girl hiding behind her mother's saree. I soon learnt their visit was to see me (as a returned warrior) and they wanted to know if they should send their son to the same school too!

I, like the veteran of school affairs that I thought I was, explained that they son was already too old (after all he was already my age) and he had already missed his chance, but if the younger person worked hard he could try and get through!

Well, I like to believe it was my advice that got our country a fine air commander! The shy 9-year-old was Air Marshal Chandrashekharan Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, VM, ADC who retired as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), Western Air Command after the famous Balakot strike!

Well, to come back to the Golden Jubilee, C. Hari Kumar had just joined school and his father was visiting him and I was taking him around as his guide! There was a photo somewhere

(wish I had it now to show you guys) of me sitting on a bench (opposite Pratap Section watching the helicopters land) with Hari, his father and another 1st term I had befriended. You see after a difficult 1st term that I had myself; I tried to help new 1st termers settle down in the school routine.

Anyway, this other kid was Bimal Verma! Now Bimal retired as Vice Admiral, AVSM, ADC after serving as Commander-in-Chief of Andaman and Nicobar Command. In retrospect, I was the only nincompoop of that group!

However, I am sure these grand get-togethers do leave a lasting impression on young minds and I have no doubt these two must also have been inspired by the events of 13th March 1972 to become and achieve what they did in their illustrious careers. Now this Centenary celebration too would inspire kids in school today to become the next commanders of our armed forces. Wishing everyone all the very best. ■

(The author was in Ranjit Section from 1969 to 1974 and is now a retired entrepreneur and a student of astrophysics)

RIMCOLLIAN FOREVER

— **BRIG MOTHY
GEORGE JACOB**
1974-79/Chandragupta



As I crossed the portals of
The gate into Rajwara Camp
And traced the path I took four decades ago
My heart danced as the earth below
Sprung a music composed during
The half-decade I roamed that earth
The divine earth that stood blessed
Blessed by the peaks besides
And the lush green all around
As the steps took me on a trip
To the grounds and the halls
Through the trees and around the lawns
And then when I rediscovered my comrades
As our arms swung to capture each other's
As our shoulders rubbed together in bonhomie
Sweet gentle lyrics flowed
Ringing nostalgic thoughts
"It is where I was born again,
Was the cradle for leadership,
Place where I wet my beak,
Where I travelled longest to reach,
Where I found my comrades in arms,
Where I broke free of shackles
Where I found my reading spirits
Where my adolescence was born,
Where manhood found me,
Where I founded my values
Where I first looked at a girl differently
Where I found me...."
My sweet alma mater
The heaven of my youth
Be my home; Be my tomb of life
Keep me in a corner of your heart
Into your arms receive me always and forever
Keeping me frozen in time as a Rimcollian forever.

MY ENCOUNTER WITH RIMCOLLIANS

— COL **VIJAY GIDH**, VSM (RETD)



There is always a sense of pride when one claims that he belongs to RIMC. Our Alumni or Old Boys have been a great source of inspiration and meeting a fellow Rimcollian at remote locations or during special occasions has been a pleasure and strengthened our faith in the Rimcollian fraternity.

RIMC was celebrating its Golden Jubilee in March 1971. The President of India, Mr VV Giri was the Chief Guest and it was a great honour that three of the four Army Commanders were Rimcollians. Lt Gen PS Bhagat was famous for his jaunty style of wearing the peak cap. We were 10th termers then and I wished to have a photograph with him. When requested, he readily agreed. The group photograph taken with Mr RC Sharma, Mr GS Bisht and my coursemate Priotosh Deb is one of my proud possession.

After spending a year with my unit in Sikkim, I got posted to 11 Assam Rifles in 1981. While the Battalion Headquarters was located at Along (now Alo), the companies were located in far-flung posts near the border. As a young Captain, I was posted to Manigong post,

which involved an eight-days walk from Along.

Manigong was a beautiful place. With no electricity, we were cut off from the outside world. The mail or newspapers reached us once a fortnight, my transistor was my sole companion. We were air maintained and it was a wonderful experience witnessing the IAF aircrafts - initially Dakotas, Caribous, MI-4 and finally the MI-8s drop ration

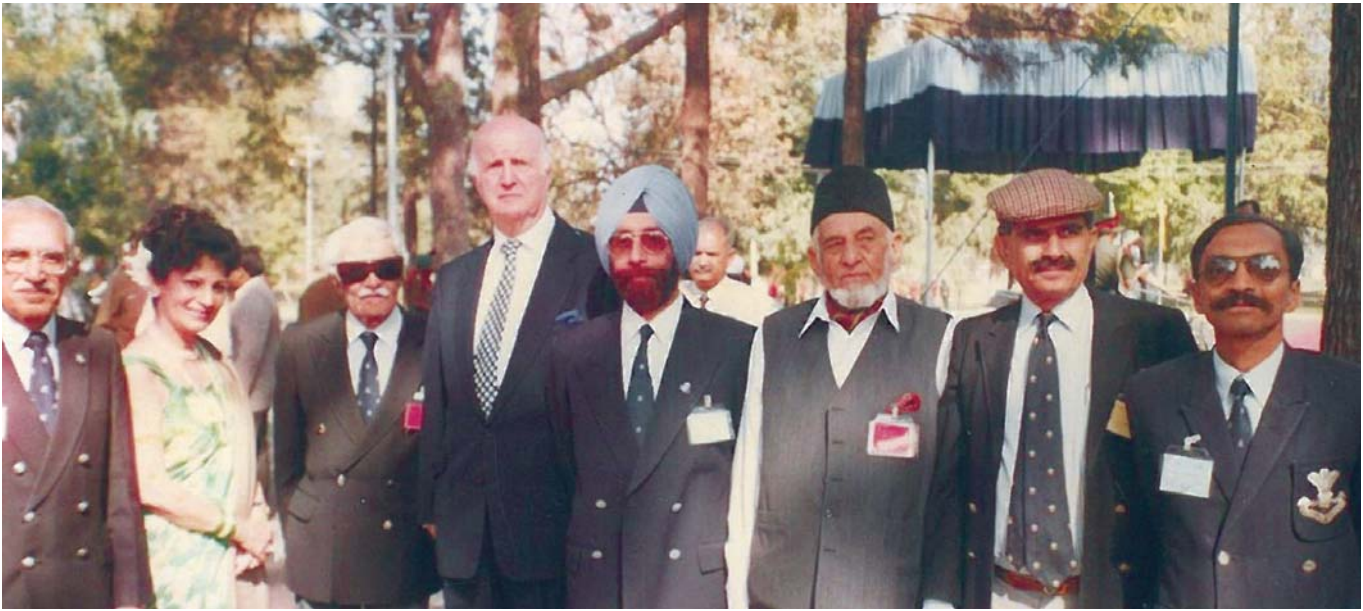
on our posts. When the GOC from Dinjan visited our post, it was a pleasure to meet the Chetak pilots. I learnt that two Rimcollians - HS Sandhu and AK Prasad were posted in the MI-8 squadron in Chabua. I sent a small note for Sandhu, requesting for some newspapers and magazines whenever there was an airdrop.

After a few days, I was surprised to find a bundle of old English newspapers and copies of Illustrated Weekly dropped at the helipad after the air drop! It was a treat to receive a small package with every air drop thereafter, it kept my morale high! After a year I was posted as Adjutant in Battalion HQ at Along, when my wife joined me. It was nice to meet Sandhu and Prasad and thank them.

One evening while visiting the small market in Along, I was surprised to see a smart young boy wearing the NDA blazer. It was nice meeting him, he had come home during the NDA term break. It was a pleasant surprise to meet this



A get-together in Manipur (from Left) Maj AS Bhinder, Mr S Sarat Singh, Brigadier NS Brar, Self and Mr YN Singh



Platinum Jubilee Celebration (From Left) Gen VN Sharma, Mrs Sharma, Gen Gul Hasan, Lord Slim, Col (later Maj Gen) SVP Singh, Capt Taj Mohammed Khanzada, Maj Gen Ashok Mehta and self

same person in RIMC in 1994 - Maj Jarken Gamlin. He remembered our brief encounter in Along, we never knew we were Rimcollians. Gamlin had come to RIMC for preparation for the Staff College exam, but I noticed that he along with Shivender Singh and Sunny Meitei would be playing more of football than studying for the exam!

RIMC was celebrating its Platinum Jubilee in March 1997 and the President, Shri SD Sharma was to release the special commemorative Platinum Jubilee stamp on the occasion. Col (later Lt Gen) NS Brar, who had designed the stamp and was to be introduced to his Excellency after the release, requested me to take his photographs on his camera. Being a keen philatelist, when I went over later to purchase the stamps, they had been sold out as hot cakes. When Col Brar learnt of this incident, he kindly presented me with a complete set of commemorative stamp with first day cover and folder, which I proudly preserve among my prized collection. Little did I know that we were to meet again after a year in Manipur and later Nagaland!

It was a pleasure meeting the Pakistani Rimcollians again during the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, since I had the privilege of being their Liaison Officer when they visited RIMC in March

1990. It was wonderful meeting Lord Slim. A rare photograph taken with Capt Taj Mohd Khanzada, Gen Gul Hasan, Lord Slim and Gen VN Sharma is one of my prized photographs.

Lord Slim mentioned that he was likely to accompany a British delegation of war veterans and their families during their visit to Imphal and Kohima in the near future. At that time I was not aware that our unit would be deployed for Counter Insurgency operations after a year in Manipur and I would be privileged to meet him again in Imphal!

Our unit was fortunate to serve in UN Peace Keeping Mission (UNAVEM-III) in Angola in 1995-96. The Rimcollian presence in the mission area was admirable; we all contributed our share for the UNAVEM peace process. Angola being a vast country, they all visited our unit in the highlands of Negage in ones and twos; while I had the opportunity of being a guest in Capt (later Maj Gen) H Dharmarajan's Engineer Company located in the lovely port town of Lobito, where I tasted the best of lobsters I have ever had.

Col Anil Vashist (1960-65), who was serving with the UN and posted in UN HQ, New York, visited our battalion in March 1996. Col RK Manucha was the Commanding Officer of 16 GUARDS -the

unit which replaced our unit in July 1996.

Our unit was inducted in the Imphal Valley in early 1998 when insurgency was again at its peak. We owe a large share of our success to the excellent advice and useful tips given to me by the Rimcollians staying in Imphal - particularly Salam Sarat Singh. He briefed me regarding the humane attitude of the troops while dealing with the local population, which we ensured.

I was explained the rich history and cultural traditions of Manipur. During the local cultural Kut festival held in Manipur, Salam Sarat suggested that our unit showcase our Bhangra dance - it turned out to be the star attraction during the event, with the Chief Minister joining our troupe!

We visited Manipur again in 2012. While YN Singh, my course mate looked after us, Salam Sarat and his wife kindly conducted us around Imphal. We were fortunate to witness the famous Raas Lila dance at Shri Govindajee Temple on full moon night, 05 April 2012, when 20 odd Gopis gracefully danced their way around the idols of Lord Krishna and Radha.

I wanted to meet Mary Kom, as she had qualified for the London Olympics in July 2012. We drove all the way to her remote



With Maj H Dharmarajan and his family at our unit temple



With Col Ali Ahmed Zaki

village Kangathei, near Moirang, only to learn that she was busy preparing for the London Olympics in our city - Pune!

It was nice to visit Imphal in April 2014 to attend the 70th Anniversary Commemorations of the Battle of Imphal. Salam Sarat accompanied me to the various battlefield locations. It was a treat to later witness an exhibition Sajol Kangjei (Manipuri polo) match at Imphal Stadium.

Alas Salam is no more, he succumbed to Covid in May this year. We had spoken on 14 March, when he wished me on Rimcollians. I promised to ring him again - it just remained.

Our unit was deployed in Chakhabama in late 1999 to monitor the ceasefire between the government of India and the NSCN (IM). Maj Dharmarajan was commanding the Field Company Engineers at Rangapahar, when his parents visited him. Dharmarajan's father had earlier served in erstwhile Assam and his mother was keen to visit a traditional Naga village. It was pleasure to invite them over to Chakhabama. His parents still vividly remember the visit.

Our son Varun who was in his final term in RIMC, joined me in Chakhabama during the winter break. We visited Zakhamoto meet Capt (later Col) Vivek Sharma.

After my retirement, Brig CS Thapa suggested that I should write regularly for the Rimcollian Newsletter covering events in Pune, especially NDA. It has



Capt HA Mohite

been a pleasure writing about the NDA POP, our medal winners and the Reunions in Pune for the Newsletter.

Col SA Mohitie (Minnie) and his elder brother Capt HA Mohite have both been a source of inspiration, it was always a pleasure meeting them. An interesting incident is worth mentioning. After a trip to the Italian battlefields where our battalion had fought during World War II, I was to deliver a talk in Pune University on "The Battles of Monte Cassino" in 2014. I had invited the Mohite brothers; they both came well-dressed in their regimental attire. Capt HA Mohite, who had fought as a 2Lt during the Fourth Battle, proudly wore his medals - the Cassino medal, Italian Star, WW II medal, Occupational Force in Japan medal and the Independence medal.

It was a pleasant surprise when Col Ali Ahmed visited us one fine morning a year ago. He had come to Pune to deliver a talk in Symbiosis University the previous day. My wife prepared "Kandhe Pohe", a tasty Maharashtrian dish which he relished, having enjoyed it earlier in his Maratha unit. After breakfast, he wished to visit NDA. Since I was unable to drive due to my back injury, he volunteered to drive my old Maruti 800 car.

There are many other encounters one would like to mention about - how Sandhu and Prasad managed to send me in an AN-12 Assam Courier from Chabua to Delhi when I had to proceed on leave; the lift in Gen S Padmanabhan's chopper till Jammu after the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations; having missed the affiliation ceremony of Punjab Regiment with INS Ranjit in 1997, the VIP treatment meted out by the Captain of the ship, Capt (later Cmde) Ranbir Talwar when I visited his ship later; meeting Lord Slim in Imphal; the aerial reconnaissance with Brig (later Maj Gen) P Rajgopal over the picturesque Dzukou Valley, after the ambush on the Nagaland CM in early 2000; and Col Vivek Sharma's flying visit home en route to NDA. They can wait for the next episode of the Newsletter! ■

(The author was in school from 1967-72 in Shivaji Section. He later also served as Administrative Officer at RIMC)



Like me or Hate me,
both are in my favour
If you like me I am in your Heart,
If you hate me I am in your mind



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



Dr SC Vats

Education
should be wholesome
and its imparting have an
inter-disciplinary approach



योग: कर्मसु कौशलम्
IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

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Special Feature I



योग: कर्मसु कौशलम्
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Epistle of Handsome Oriental

On the 128th Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Chicago address, *Dr SC Vats* revisits the teachings of the great monk



As we celebrate 128th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's address at Chicago, it's time to revisit the teachings of the wandering monk in the context of the current mood of the nation. Swamiji worked on three premises - social discipline, patriotism and belongingness.

At the epochal Parliament of the World's Religions, which had opened on 11 September 1893 at the Art Institute of Chicago as part of the World's Columbian Exposition, Swami Vivekananda gave a brief speech representing India and its ancient religion. He began his dialogue with those famous lines, "Sisters and Brothers of America!" At these words, Swamiji received a two-minute standing ovation from the crowd of 7000 delegates. When silence was restored he began his address, greeting the youngest of the nations on behalf of "the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of *sannyasins*, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance."

The short discourse by Swami Vivekananda voiced the spirit of the Parliament.

On hearing Swamiji, Parliament President John Henry Barrows said, "India, the Mother of religions is represented by Swami Vivekananda, the Orange-monk who exercised the most wonderful influence over his auditors." Vivekananda attracted widespread attention in the press, which called him the "cyclonic monk from India."

Vivekananda's speeches at the Parliament had the common theme of universality, emphasising religious tolerance. He soon became known as a "handsome oriental" and made a huge impact as an orator.

After the Parliament of Religions, he toured many parts of the US delivering lectures on the "life and religion to thousands." Vivekananda spent nearly two years lecturing in the eastern and central United States, primarily in Chicago, Detroit, Boston and New York.

He founded the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894. During one such session at Brooklyn Ethical Society, he remarked, "I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East."



During another such session he said, "I do not come to convert you to a new belief. I want you to keep your own belief; I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist; the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian; the Unitarian a better Unitarian. I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your own soul."

Many decades later, looking for that within my own soul, in the lap of the Himalayas I came face-to-face with Swami Jitatmananda. It was in the year 1997 that I met Swami Jitatmanandaji, an eminent educationist, management expert, author of books, *Modern Physics & Vedanta* and *Indian Ethos in Management*, an active social worker and the editor of *Prabudh Bharat* (Awakened India), a journal started by Swami Vivekananda.

This was not my first interface with Swami Vivekananda's legacy. I was initiated as a disciple by Swami Bhuteshananda, then president of the Rama Krishna Mission order, way back in 1977. Since then discourses by knowledgeable monks like Swami Ranganathananda, Swami Swami Budhananda, Swami Vandanananda and Swami Gokulananda at Shyamalatal Ashram, Almora Ashram and Mayavati Ashram kept me greatly engaged with Swamiji's intellectual and spiritual inheritance. I drew immense satisfaction serving at the RK Mission Ashram in Delhi as part of the managing committee.

As the destiny ordained under a silver oak tree at "Advait Ashram" in Mayavati in Pithoragrah district of Uttarakhand, vibrating thoughts flowed from Swami Jitatmananda's lips

in the balmy aroma of the dense pine and fir forest and he almost gave a diktat to me to set up an Institute, for higher learning in the capital city of India, in the name of Swami Vivekananda, to me and several others, a prophet and a path finder.

It was a gigantic task that fell upon my shoulders. But resolved as I was, I returned to Delhi and in a couple of months' time sold my ancestral house and from the sales proceed of that house seed capital was created, which was so very important for establishing a new Institute with high ideals.

In order to give shape to Swamiji's dreams, I rolled out a road map. As a first step, I held brain storming session with eminent scholars and people from academia along with some legal luminaries and retired civil servants. The brain child of which was a society for Total Revival of Nation, thus called the Society for Total Revival and National Glory and True Heritage (STRENGTH), which was later registered in 1998, as a charitable society under the Registration of Societies Act of 1860, with a mission of making Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies (VIPS) an ideal educational Institution with the clear objective of "*Man Making, Character Building, Nation Building*" as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda.

Many years after Swami Vivekananda had passed away, Noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore told his French counterpart Romain Rolland, "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative."

Swamiji's writings impressed several other

western intellectuals. He communicated with orientalist Max Müller, and scientist Nikola Tesla, who were influenced by his Vedic teachings. American industrialist John D Rockefeller is said to have made his first large donation for public welfare and later became a notable philanthropist after a meeting with Vivekananda. Swamiji laconically explained to Rockefeller that his philanthropy could be a channel to help the poor and distressed people.

He inspired India's first modern corporate honcho, Jamsetji Tata to set-up Indian Institute of Science. In 1893, during the journey from Yokohama to Canada on the ship *Empress*, Vivekananda met Jamsetji Tata who was also going to Chicago. During the conversation Vivekananda told Tata about the necessity of establishing a world class scientific Institution in India and this encouraged Tata to establish the Indian Institute of Science, which gradually has become India's best-known research university.

My endeavour is a small step in that direction; to take VIPS to the level of eminence which IIS has achieved but not in just one field of research but with an interdisciplinary approach towards education. That's what had Swamiji ordained -- Eastern Wisdom Must Meet Western Science.

Swami Vivekananda's writings inspired a generation of leaders of freedom struggle including Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Aurobindo Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bagha Jatin. Kamala Nehru was an initiated disciple of the order, so is our Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On 6 February 1921, Mahatma Gandhi came to Belur Math and paid homage to Swami Vivekananda. On this occasion he said: "I have come here to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda. I have gone through his works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold. I ask you,



Swami Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893

young men, not to go away empty-handed without imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died."

With Indian Nationalism still in its nascent state when Vivekananda lived and worked, Swamiji's influence in West gave it the great confidence. Nation's second President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, a widely acclaimed philosopher, has said that Vivekananda was born in a "critical period" when the nation and her people were collapsing in "despair, frustration and hopelessness" and in such circumstances Vivekananda's teachings gave them new hope and taught them to rely on spiritual resources.

According to social reformer Charles Freer Andrews, "The Swami's intrepid patriotism gave a new colour to the national movement throughout India." Nationalism is a prominent theme in Vivekananda's thought. He believed that a country's future depends on its people, and his teachings focused on human development. He wanted "to set in motion a machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest."

These thought later got interpreted variously in the ideas and philosophies of later Indian social and political leaders. Be it Mahatma Gandhi's *Sarvodaya* or Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay's *Antodaya*, Swamiji remained the source of these

great social philosophical treatises. Gandhian reformer and Bhoodan Movement's driving force Acharya Vinoba Bhave praised Vivekananda's contribution in making the Indians conscious of their strength and said that Swamiji showed them their shortcomings and defects and also taught them to overcome these.

Inspired by these ideals, we at the VIPS have adopted Swamiji's ideas and ideals in the field of education. Vivekananda believed education is the manifestation of perfection already in human beings. He thought it a pity that the exist-

ing system of education did not enable a person to stand on her/his own feet, nor did it teach her/him self-confidence and self-respect.

To Vivekananda, education was not only collection of information, but something more meaningful; he felt education should be *man-making, life giving and character-building*. To him education was an assimilation of noble ideas.

Swami Vivekananda prescribed 'positive' education. He said, if young boys and girls are encouraged and are not unnecessarily criticized, they were bound to improve.

He also told the youth: "Set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, you are our brothers-a part and parcel of our bodies, and we love you and never hate you." These are the ideas we try to inculcate at Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies through innovative teaching-learning process and imbibing ideals of social responsibility.

To us at Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies (VIPS), work is like journey towards discovering our inner self; *man-making, life giving and character-building* the destination.

(The writer is Founder & Chairman, Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies [VIPS], Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi)

INTELLECTUAL MONK



Swami Vivekananda once spoke of himself as a “condensed India.” His life and teachings are of inestimable value to the West for an understanding of the mind of Asia. William James, the Harvard philosopher, called the Swami the “paragon of Vedantists.” Max Muller and Paul Deussen, the famous Orientalists of the 19th century, held him in genuine respect and affection. “His words,” writes Romain Rolland, “are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses.”

Falcons of Chhamb

While in the course of closely editing the centenary series calendar for the year 2021, I received a note from our editor, Air Marshal PP Reddy, “FYI, Falcons of Chhamb that is the 101 Squadron of the Indian Air Force where I and Tony Dhanoa (Air Chief Marshal Birinder Singh Dhanoa) spent many years as young officers.” The put me searching on 101 squadron, and to state it briefly, “101 Squadron was formed with the specific role of photo reconnaissance.

Enjoying the place of pride in the Squadron crest is a trained hunting Falcon, the bird’s keen eyesight, quick and sure kill ability symbolizes the role for which the Squadron was formed. The squadron was resurrected with Dassault Rafale in June 2021 and was inducted into Hasimara, West Bengal on 28 July 2021.

In the later years, PP Reddy went to



ACM BS Dhanoa and AM PP Reddy at a briefing of Falcons of Chhamb



Air Marshal PP Reddy accompany Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar during a visit to the school

become Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to The Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), and BS Dhanoa Chief

of Air Staff (CAS). Both went to head the Rimcollian Old Boys Associations (ROBA), Reddy preceding Dhanoa in the office,

helping the school to remain on firm footings

—Sidharth Mishra

The Kanchcha Sahabs of Sikand Aite

—MAJ GEN **JARKEN GAMLIN**



THE KANCHHA SAHABS



DH PARAB



SK SINGH Sr



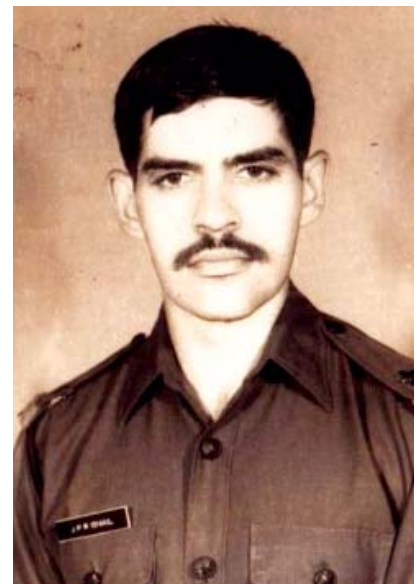
LT SINGH



SK SINGH Jr



JARKEN GAMLIN



JPR ISMAIL



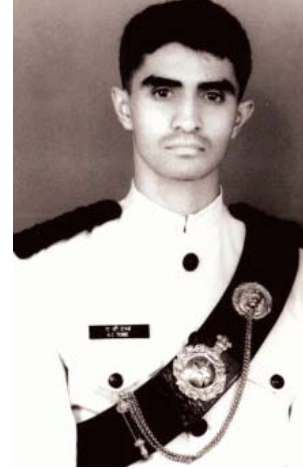
S KHATRI



A TIWARI



S KANNOTH



AC TEMBE

I was commissioned into 2/8 GR in the summer of 1983. '2/8 GR' stands for 'the 2nd Battalion of the 8th Gorkha Rifles', and is traditionally pronounced as '*Sikand Aite*' - the Gorkha way! When I joined the *paltan* - *paltan*, meaning 'battalion or unit' - I was assigned to 'Charlie' company.

My first Company Commander was, then Major, Col DH Parab - yes, you got it right, the erstwhile Commandant RIMC. Adjutant was, then Captain, Col SK Singh (Junior) while SK Singh (Senior), who later retired as the Vice Chief of Army Staff, had just moved out to a new raising - 7/8 GR. Col LT Singh, then a Major, was away on deputation to Assam Rifles. And if you haven't noticed, all the above-mentioned officers are Rimcollians.

Later, we were joined by a few more stalwarts starting with Col Jeremy Ismail, followed by Maj Gen Sanjeev Khatri, Cols Ambarish Tewari, Sanjay Kannothe and Abhijeet Tembe. No wonder *Sikand Aite* is known as a Rimcollian *paltan*.

The day I joined, the first significant event which awaited me was the famed *Sikand Aite* 'haircut' which almost changed my identity! The barber - one Havildar Parshuram Thakur and thank God he was not wielding an axe! - gleefully mowed my hair with a clipper on the sides and grudgingly used a scissor to crop the residual hair on the top. My buddy, an oldish Johnny

Gorkha on the verge of retirement - '18 Rame' - was quick to announce that I looked more like a plucked chicken! He also expressed his displeasure to Parshuram guruji for being so mean to their *kanchha sahib*.

On the hindsight, perhaps, we were much ahead of our times from a fashion perspective since 'punk style' was not yet in vogue then! For the benefit of the uninformed, *Sikand Aite* is reckoned among the elite of infantry and considered the 'OGiest' or 'Olive Greenest' *paltan* - it is a fauji jargon, meaning 'the most disciplined unit' - in the Indian Army. 'A youngster should only be seen and not heard' was the oft-quoted reminder. It was almost like being back in the academy as a first term! So, for a newly commissioned young officer like me joining *Sikand Aite* was a tragedy of sorts because the least one expected at the end of nine years of rigorous training as a cadet was a more relaxed life-style - a la sixth term in the NDA - as an officer! But then, as they say, wishes aren't horses.... ha-ha!!

Amidst such a setting, personally for me, Col Parab could simply be likened to what O2 is to a Corona patient today! It was an absolute delight to work under him. He could make a difficult task look easy, yet make a mundane event appear significant. The first time I was introduced to the 'dal soup' from the company langar he made it sound like the ultimate broth from a

continental menu. This 'dal soup', in reality, had oil floating all over on the surface with a generous spread of fried red chilies on top to make it look and taste spicy!

Basically, he made life interesting and had a way of making each one of us feel special. He believed that every individual had a different level of competence and that it was important for a leader to identify the core competence of each individual to be able to exact the optimum out of each based on the actual capability. Say, an individual whom you pegged at 80% competence level, delivers 80% of an expected target - then, metaphorically speaking, this individual has achieved his 100% and, therefore, deserved a 'pat' on the back. Now the individual who probably had never ever received a 'pat' because he could never achieve 100% otherwise, will find new vigour and resolve to perform better and perhaps, deliver more than 80% the next time around. The leader is happy since the individual has delivered as per his expectation and the individual feels happy because the leader is happy. So, you have a happy team.

This, I believe, is one of the keys to human resource management and thanks to Col Parab, this approach worked wonders for me too! But the icing on the cake was Mrs Geeta Parab, a gregarious lady with a protective mother-hen instinct, who would



On October 22, 2016 2/8 Gorkha Rifles made the country proud by fetching a gold medal at the world's toughest annual military patrol exercise, held in the Cambrian Mountains in Wales by the British Army. The eight-member team of 8 Gorkha Rifles' second battalion covered the 50 kilometre course on foot through the rugged mountainous terrain in less than 48 hours. The unit was then commanded by Colonel Abhijit Tembe and the team trained by his predecessor Col Sanjay Kannothe, both Rimcollians.

happily indulge a new recruit like me to a dinner or a quick bite to keep the sagging morale afloat. What a terrific combo as a couple - the Parabs!

Col LT Singh returned to the *paltan* during our tenure in Uri Sector (1985-89) to command 'Delta' company on the Line of Control (LoC). He was known for his thoroughness in everything he did and it was kind of a gag amongst the staff officers to receive a call from him. Ohh...*mar gaye!*!is what one would hear them mutter under their breath whenever Maj LTS called up. No, not because he nagged or scolded; but only because he would take pains to convey his points in great detail and ensure each point was explained to a T, and a conversation with him could last more than an hour or so on most occasions. You see, he left nothing to presumptions.

I remember, once we decided to have

an inter-post carom competition and as a neighboring post commander, I called him up to finalise the schedule and modalities for the competition. For the next hour and a half, he went about explaining the contingencies, covering aspects of movement of troops, timings, strength, weather, weapons, ammunition, radio communication, rules of the game, number of participants and other administrative issues - poofs! - it was almost like reviewing a detailed 'appreciation' we write in our courses of instructions for an attack on an objective across an obstacle system in enemy territory!

But it taught me a lesson or two on how to plan an event in detail to preclude any setback for want of options at a later stage.

When he took to carpentry as a hobby, I dare say, he could have given

the best of carpenters a run for their money. Such was his focus towards any task at hand. These days, as I gather through the social media uploads, he is much into cycling, scouring the hilly terrain on the periphery of Manipur Valley. But I wouldn't be surprised if he decided to explore beyond the realms of Manipur in the near future, on a bicycle, suitably self-modified to make it foldable, portable and user friendly duly equipped with the latest gadgets like GPS, video camera, speedometer etc. Let's take a bet!

With his immaculate personality and smart bearing, combined with the reputation of having been a Services squash player and an outstanding sportsman, Col SK Singh Jr remained a source of motivation to many of us. As an Adjutant he was strict yet empathetic. While he never overtly

displayed his Rimcollian spirit and rightly so, he would in a subtle way help me tide over minor hiccups and guide me on various aspects of professional soldiering. I remember performing the duties of 'stick orderly' as a pair with him during the *paltan's* 150th Raising Day ceremonial parade, way back in April 1985, wherein Field Marshal Sam Bahadur Manekshaw graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The Field Marshal was quick to notice and queried if we both were brothers. He even had the magnanimity to compliment us for the smart drill we displayed. It was indeed a landmark moment for two young Rimcollians to jointly usher the Field Marshal as ceremonial pilots. Col SK Singh went on to command 6/8 GR in later years and is presently settled in Bangalore.

When I received my posting to NDA as an Instructor, I was interviewed by my Commanding Officer (CO), Col CN Tembe prior my departure from the *paltan*. At the end of our interaction, he told me in jest, "Do you see the bald patches on my head? It is the pressure of having too many Rimcollians under command! But, since there isn't much hair left to lose, a few more Rimcollians in the *paltan* will not make a difference!" No, he was not a Rimcollian, but his fondness for them could not have come about by chance. Not surprisingly, his son Abhijeet joined RIMC a couple of years later and had the distinction of commanding *Sikand Aite* as a second-generation officer. Col CN Tembe, who I hold in high esteem, remains a proud father of a Rimcollian!

Interestingly, when Abhijeet joined the *paltan* I was the second-in-command and the CO, Col N Muralidhar. Due to a large differential in the length of service between us, an officer from another 8 GR *paltan* was being posted in as Col Murali's relief. Implying I was not likely to get a chance to command *Sikand Aite* even if I got approved for the next rank. Once, while discussing the probable future chain of command in the *paltan*,



The 2/8 Gorkha in 1947 established Indian sovereignty over Ladakh. The unit was then commanded by Lt Col HS Parab, whose son Col Dilip H Parab later joined the RIMC and also commanded the school between 1990-97

Col Murali wondered if, given the option, I would be willing to take over command in the next 'turn-over'. It may be understood that commanding one's own *paltan* is every young officer's ultimate dream, but I politely declined because I was convinced it was best for Jeremy, who was my immediate junior and a second-generation officer - his father having commanded *Sikand Aite* in the early 50s, to take over command without tinkering with the normal flow of events rather than me waiting a longish period and Jeremy forfeiting his chance to command.

Col Murali had apparently posed the same question to Jeremy on a separate occasion. In response, Jeremy had suggested my name for the command in the next turn over, and volunteered to wait for his turn even it meant waiting another year or two. Mind you, it was not as if Jeremy and I had discussed the issue earlier. Col Murali was probably quite taken aback by our response since this was not in consonance with the expected narrative

especially so when officers, especially from infantry, were known to have manipulated and contrived to take over command of their parent units.

Later, during a dinner at his home, Col Murali did express his deep appreciation for the spirit of loyalty, camaraderie and brotherhood that was intrinsically imbued in, and among, Rimcollians. Therefore, it was no big deal that a few years down the road, his daughter Nriya, got married to Abhijeet Tembe and Col Murali became a Rimcollian's father-in-law - the closest he could get to being a Rimcollian!

Notwithstanding my little misgivings about *Sikand Aite* as a young officer - you can't grudge me my youthful aspirations(!) - in retrospect I do realize and acknowledge that it was the grooming under intense scrutiny and the Spartan environment in the *paltan* which firmed up the foundation of my life as a professional and honed the survival skills and instinct of a soldier. I got the opportunity to take over command of 5/8 GR - referred to as *Sirmoor Rifles* - sometime in 2002 while Jeremy gave a sterling account of himself as the CO of *Sikand Aite*. He took premature retirement a year after attending the Higher Command course due to personal reasons and is settled in Roorkee enjoying the quiet and serene environ of his farm.

Maj Gen Sanjeev Khatri is GOC Dehradun Sub Area presently - in the backyard of our alma mater. Lucky guy, isn't he? Col Sanjay Kannoth is well on his way to achieving greater laurels while Col Abhijeet Tembe is equally poised to shoulder higher responsibilities. I hope that the legacy of Rimcollians in *Sikand Aite* will continue for posterity and I am sure we are going to have many more joining the fraternity in the coming years. How time flies! I hung up my boots last year in August and here I am, still longing to wind back my years and life as a cadet in RIMC. Long live RIMC! ■

(The author was in school from 1973-79, Cadet Captain in the first term - Jan 1979 - of the publisher of this volume)

The Air Power at Tiger Hill

— AIR VICE MARSHAL **NARMDESHWAR 'TIWI' TIWARI**



A painting of M 2000 dropping laser-guided bombs over Tiger Hill by. Painting By Group Captain Deb Gohain

On 24 Jun 1999, the Indian public were mesmerised by the images of the precision attack by the IAF on Tiger Hill being played out on national television. Already, the dynamics of the military operations, being beamed into living rooms by a proactive media, was keeping viewers glued to their television sets like never before. This detail and clear images of precision guided air strikes became a defining moment of the Kargil war. But, unbeknown to many, the work to make it all happen started much before and many miles away from Kargil; in Bangalore and in Gwalior.

Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE) is a premier organisation of the IAF, entrusted with testing and acceptance of new weapons and systems for the IAF. It is based in Bangalore, the centre of aerospace activity in India, and is also home to the IAF Test Pilots' School (the only one in Asia and one of the six recognised such schools in the world). In 1996, it was entrusted with the task of integrating the M-2000 and Jaguar aircraft with laser guided bomb (LGB) kits on general purpose 1000 lb Mk 83 bombs. Over the course of a year, it was successfully

integrated on the M-2000 and Jaguar aircraft. The M-2000 aircraft was already cleared for carrying the 2200 lb (1000 kg) Matra LGB. For guidance of the bomb, it used the Patric laser designation pod (LDP).

During the integration, two issues of concern came up. One was the fuse (used to trigger the detonation of the bomb) was an electrical one (already in use by the IAF but available only in limited quantity). The other pertained to extending the laser illumination time on the Patric pod, since that was essential to ensure guidance of the new 1000 lb with



The author receiving President's Gold Medal from then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the NDA in May 1985

LGB kits till impact. Since proprietary software to modify the laser illumination time was not available to the IAF, additional modifications were done to make it happen. Around the same time (1996-97), the IAF contracted to integrate the Litening LDP on the M-2000 and Jaguar aircraft.

Litening LDP, manufactured by Rafael Industries of Israel, was a highly capable LDP that provided a great many obvious advantages. Firstly, it provided for commonality between the M-2000 and Jaguar aircraft. Essentially, it meant that it could be flown without any modification on both the aircraft. It also provided a much-needed night precision bombing capability, since the pod was equipped with an infrared seeker, capable of picking up targets by night. Lastly, the pod software could be modified to designate different kinds of laser guided bombs. These capabilities greatly improved the flexibility of employment of both the pod as well as laser guided bombs.

Over, the course of the next one and a half years, the team from ASTE, carried out much of the ground work and the flight trials to successfully integrate this pod on the M-2000. As the god desired, then Squadron Leader, I was then posted as a test pilot with ASTE, and was assigned a key role in the integration team. It culminated in successful release of modified LGBs with the Litening LDP in Mar 1999. However, a new fuse, integrated on the modified bombs, failed to function as designed. So this issue was left open for the next phase of trials. The software was also not frozen, as integration work on Jaguar aircraft was still not completed.

On 26 May 1999, the decision to employ the IAF in the Kargil war was formally approved. On 27 May, I was augmented from Test Pilots' School to Air Force Station, Gwalior. Landing at 0200 hours on 28 May, I soon got down to work to ensure the availability of the Litening pod for use by the M-2000, should the need arise. Under the aegis of

the then AOC of Gwalior, Air Cmde PS Ahluwalia, a quick plan was drawn to operationalise the pod. While a couple of pods were available in Gwalior, the rest were airlifted from ASTE, Bangalore. The team was strengthened with the presence of Sqn Ldr J Mishra and Sqn Ldr VR Mantha, a test pilot and a flight test engineer respectively.

Since the pods were still in trial configurations, it was essential to freeze it to the last tested configuration, so that it could be released to the squadron for operational use. This required the availability of the manufacturer's engineers. Early morning of 28 May, the programme manager of Rafael was contacted for help. To the credit of the programme manager of Rafael, he immediately understood the gravity of the situation and assigned his most competent engineers to the job. They were available on site within two days, something of a record in any test programme. With the availability of the team, quickly all the pods were



With Defence Minister Rajnath Singh after flying him in a sortie on home-built LCA Tejas

configured with a standardised software and tested. The trial flights were conducted by self, most of them along with Air Cmde Ahluwalia in the back seat.

These flights also served as a medium to demonstrate the capability of the pod by both day and night. Representative target sets were created around Gwalior airfield to check if they could be picked up using the pod by both day and night. Since little was known about the pod at that time, it was important to showcase the capability of this pod to the powers that be. Even the AOC-in-C of Central Air Command, Air Mshl Bhatia, came to Gwalior to fly a sortie to see for himself the capability that this pod provided.

While the pod provided a good capability for reconnaissance by both day and night, its strength lay in its ability to successfully guide laser guided bombs. Accordingly, integration of laser guided bomb along with this pod became a critical requirement. The team worked

day in and day out to come up with a workable solution. The primary issue was the integration of a new fuse, since the fuse in the previous trials had failed. Having searched far and wide, the team was able to successfully integrate an old fuse lying in one of the bomb dumps.

Along with some mechanical modifications on the bomb kits and the carriage pylons, these were successfully demonstrated for use by the operational squadron. A quick set of trials were undertaken to prove the end to end integration of the entire modification, in order to clear it for operational use. This included a release of a laser guided bomb at an air force range. It was to the credit of the entire team that worked in Gwalior, the pods and LGBs were ready to be deployed on 4 June 99.

I landed up on 5th morning at the base where M-2000s were forward deployed and went quickly training a small team from 7 Sqn on the new pod. Within days it was deployed for

reconnaissance missions to locate enemy targets on the icy heights of the Himalayas. The first real success came on 16 June, when the logistics camp on MunthoDhalo was located using the pod's reconnaissance capabilities. While earlier intelligence photographs showed the camp to be much smaller, its location at the base of a cliff made it difficult to spot visually and thus target it with accuracy. However, with the pod, not only was the camp visually located (it had grown substantially in size) but the pilots were able to plan optimum directions of attack to inflict maximum damage.

The go ahead to target the camps was given on 16 June itself. The morning of 17th saw a wave of attacks on the target, led by four M-2000s carrying 250 kg bombs. The attack was quickly followed by a bomb damage assessment (BDA) sortie using the Litening LDP, which confirmed the extensive damage to the camp. It was a major success for the



The Mirage-2000 crew, the author is the last from the left

Indian armed forces, as not only did the Pakistani forces suffer heavy casualties, it also dented their capabilities for reinforcing their forces in the Batalik sector. The use of the Litening pod for target acquisition and BDA proved its utility in the ongoing operations. Similar template was used in many other subsequent attacks in other places, most notably in the Mushko valley.

On 24th, the first use of LGBs was made against enemy targets on Tiger Hill. Located north of Drass, Tiger Hill was an imposing feature that dominated the Srinagar-Leh Road. Because of the presence of Pakistani soldiers on Tiger Hill, accurate artillery fire was being directed on our military positions around Drass. It also rendered the highway unusable. Intelligence available had indicated the accurate position of enemy bunkers and tents. Considering its height of over 16000 feet, its importance as a target and difficulty in putting a conventional attack, it was decided to

target the enemy positions using LGBs. Accordingly, a two-ship formation with self and SqN Ldr Mohan Rao in one two-seater and Wg Cdr Rahunath Nambiar with SqN Ldr Yadav in another two-seater went for a planned attack on 23rd.

However, we had to return because of drifting low clouds that covered the target, making deployment of laser guided bombs risky (our troops were in close proximity). Therefore, the attack was planned for early morning of 24th June. In the meantime, the Chief of Air Staff, AY Tipnis landed up at the base on the evening of 23rd and was keen to fly a mission with the Litening pod. I flew a sortie at night with the CAS. The sortie was flown overhead as the target area was covered with clouds.

After the sortie, the CAS expressed his desire to fly in the Tiger Hill mission next morning. Considering the risk involved, it was decided to put him in another two-seater with the Commanding Officer, Wg Cdr Chabra. He was following the main

formation and maintaining a higher height. As usual, the escorts for the mission was provided by 1 SqN.

The mission went as planned, with the same team as the previous day. Tiger Hill was clearly visible from more than 50 miles. The army troops had also provided markers at the base of the hill (for easy identification). Since our own troops were in close proximity, this was always important to avoid fratricide. Both aircraft were able to acquire the targets easily through the pods. Both the aircraft launched near simultaneous attack from two different directions. The LGBs were being dropped at altitudes beyond the limit of their envelope. The targets were hit accurately and resulted in significant casualties. It also paved the way for an easier assault by our own ground troops subsequently. ■

(Tiwi was in school from 1977 to 1982. He was Cadet Captain when the Diamond Jubilee was celebrated on 13 March 1982).

Breaking through cloud to land in time for party

— **DEVIKA HARI KUMAR**



Air Marshal C Hari Kumar

Having one Rimcollian at home (my husband) is a challenge, imagine inviting all the Rimcollians of Eastern Air command under one roof. Jokes apart!! It was an honour to have hosted them for dinner on 12 Mar 2016 to celebrate our school raising day at Lakrekha, the Air Command House in Shillong. The invite was by word of mouth and we were not certain how many would turn up, as it included the veterans also. And we know that no Rimcollian meal during the anniversary is complete without scotch eggs and tipsy pudding. That day started off well but it turned out to be one of the

most adventurous day of my life.

Hari had to inaugurate two Advance Landing Grounds (ALG) at Ziro and Along. It was part of the very important infrastructure development project in the Eastern front. I had decided to go along with him on such trips as it was a proud moment for the Indian Air Force and I didn't want to miss it. Frankly, how could I miss it, the place is so beautiful. Of the seven ALGs under development I had already been for the inauguration of Walong ALG and it was an out-of-the-world-experience.

We took off early from the helipad at HQ EAC in a Mi-17, Medium Lift

Helicopter (MLH) for Air Force Station Tezpur. It was a beautiful morning and we were flying into the Sun along the extended banks of the Brahmaputra at an altitude of 4500ft AMSL. When suddenly the hooter inside the cabin went off, the flight gunner yelled to get our attention and told us to brace ourselves for a crash. Both the engines of the helicopter had failed. Both engines going simultaneously was one of the rarest of rare phenomenon. You would not imagine the eerie silence in the cabin.

Helicopters do carry out auto rotation to cushion their landing/crash with engine failures. But it is very

difficult with MLH of this weight class- 13 tonnes, when it falls off the sky like a stone. Other than us, the SOA HQ EAC Air Mshl Manvendra Singh was on board along with Hari's staff officer Group CaptainS Arunachalam (A Rimcollian). We were twelve of us excluding four crew members. As we kept losing height I had the urge to look out of the window and see what is happening. I was quickly instructed to brace myself and tighten seat belts with my head between my knees. I had no clue of the repercussions, which I only learnt later. I was ok with dying as I was with my husband. My only worry at that moment was our pet, a beautiful golden retriever called Honey and the reminder that the long pending "will" was still not formalised.

The details as explained by Air Marshal Manvendra Singh, who has lots of experience on helicopters and flying in this sector gave me better understanding of the incident. When we got out of hills the weather got cloudy and hazy. The normal reaction of a

I WAS OK WITH DYING AS I WAS WITH MY HUSBAND. MY ONLY WORRY AT THAT MOMENT WAS OUR PET, A BEAUTIFUL GOLDEN RETRIEVER CALLED HONEY AND THE REMINDER THAT THE LONG PENDING "WILL" WAS STILL NOT FORMALISED

helicopter pilot would be to get below the haze. That day the decision by the young but highly experienced and mature captain, of maintaining height saved the day. It gave us additional few crucial seconds in the air to diagnose and take correct emergency actions. The Mi-17, restart in the air involves first lighting up the auxillary power unit, notorious for its unreliability, that takes nearly 35-40 seconds and then proceed to start the engines one by one. At 4500 feet AMSL and with a rate of descent of around

2500 feet per minute, we had just about two minutes before the helicopter reached the water-logged marshy ground below. The AOC-in-C was calm and allowed the crew to handle the emergency. This probably saved critical seconds that would have been lost in explanation.

Gods worked overtime that day and ensured that everything functioned with clockwork precision. The Captain, Squadron Leader Vikas Puri kept his cool, understood the problem, found a solution based on deep understanding of aircraft fuel system and coordinated everything perfectly. Nothing skipped his attention as he stopped the Flight Engineer from shutting down the engines by closing the HP cock from where it would have been impossible to start the APU and relight the engines. The foam lining inside the Service fuel tank had disintegrated blocking the outlet of the fuel to the booster pump which fed the engines. Fuel starvation resulted in the engine cut. However, with enough fuel in



Air Marshal Hari Kumar and the author being presented the traditional shawls and scarfs at Ziro.



Air Marshal C Hari Kumar doing a puja before inauguration

the service tank, the transfer pumps from main tanks stopped. On activating the bypass valve once again restarted the transfer pumps to start pumping fuel into Service Tank irrespective of the fuel level. Fortunately, the churning of fuel in the Service tank dislodged the blockage in the outlet and allowed the restart of APU and the main engines.

Seconds were precious and the helicopter was pulled out of the steep dive with only a couple of hundred feet to spare before hitting the ground. We came out alive because of the skill and confident handling of an unlisted emergency by the crew. Sqn Ldr Vikas Puri received Vayu Sena Medal (gallantry) for his excellent performance in the face of great odds. The other crew were Flt Lt Adarsh Gupta, Flt Eng Sgt Surjeet Singh and Flt Gunner Sgt Ajeesh. This story, "Every Chopper Pilots - worst nightmare" is narrated by Shiv Aroor and Rahul Singh in their book, "India's Most Fearless" (True stories of Modern Military Heroes)

We landed safely at Tezpur, switched off and quarantined the aircraft for further investigation. Hari, was not perturbed by the incident and insisted on

continuing with the programme. The next Mi-17 was to be flown in for taking us to Ziro. But we did not wait, we took two Advance Light Helicopter (ALH) from that base and set course. We reached Ziro for a rousing welcome. The ALG was inaugurated with participation of the local population, the military and officials from Arunachal Pradesh. Prayers, cultural program, high tea and traditional gifting of shawls/scarfs.

The trip was from Ziro to Along was nice. The Mi-17 planned had caught up with us. We reached Along for another round of celebrations. The tribes and their characteristics change between valleys. I was pleasantly surprised by their fluency in Hindi. As these are joint user ALGs the local population was also very excited as it would improve their connectivity with the rest of the world especially during emergencies. Any one driven up from Passighat to Along would understand the time taken and the condition of the roads.

Then we started the fourth leg of the journey from Along to Chabua. We had already changed three aeroplanes.

The helicopters fly in this sector along valleys. One must look up Google to see the route and the altitude. In the mountains the weather can get very tricky and it changes fast, before you can say Jack Robinson. The weather forecast can give the general weather but it keeps changing between valleys and ground locations. The weather becomes difficult as the day progresses. The clouds sit on the hill tops and valley slopes. GPS can give the ground position but without terrain avoidance systems it's a no-go.

In the North East the other peculiarity is that the valleys are narrow, wherein turning around becomes difficult. Sure enough as we took the next bend we encountered clouds. Next, we know we are in clouds. And boy it gets dense. I could feel the anxiety levels increasing with the silence. We can feel the helicopter climbing to go over it but no joy. The crew were experienced, confident and showed it. Flying in the valleys has rules when you are outside radar pick-up and R/T calls. Our helicopters then, flew Visual Flight Rules and not Instrument Flight Rules.

Essentially the non-visual flying training was less. I know it's getting technical but I learnt all this later when they explained the gravity of the situation. Luckily, ignorance was bliss then or I would have got concerned. Finally, we broke clouds and were heading for a hill which we safely negotiated. This was our second lucky moment for the day. Life had destined better things like the Scotch eggs we talked about. Hari told me that he had given strict instructions to follow the rules and avoid pressure situations. All said and done a youngster flying the Air Officer Commanding- in-Chief would have his own presumed pressures.

We cleared the mountains and it was smooth sailing to Air Force Station Chabua, where our Avro was waiting to take us to Barapani (Shillong). The fixed wing ride was to accelerate the proceedings. The sunrise time at Shillong is an hour before Delhi and as a corollary it also sets early as per IST. Barapani was not geared up for night operations. We had lost some time in our escapades. I had to get back in time as the scotch eggs were to be made by me and so were the final touch-up to the pudding. Other way out was to land at Guwahati and take the two hours' drive up to Shillong, which was not convenient. We got direct routing from



Inaugurating the ALG at Along

Chabua to Shillong, but the weather started turning bad. We had to do a dog-leg to avoid a towering cumulonimbus cloud in our way. Clouding was reported over Barapani. But with the weather radar on the Avro the crew were confident of making it.

The runway orientation at Barapani is 04/22 and it's only a 6000ft long. The hills are to the North-West and we normally land on runway 04. The ILS at

Barapani had arrived nearly a year back but not installed. In short, the navigational aids on ground were minimal. Due to clouding we tried a left-hand circuit for runway 22. Half way through the turn on to finals we entered clouds. It was a blind descend into the bowl. As we were about to abort the landing, we broke clouds. We were high and an angle to the runway. We tried to convert it into a landing but in vain. But now we had broken clouds we went around and made an approach for runway 04 and landed. We were grateful to be back on mother Earth. The Avro had to do a night halt there.

Then the scramble started to reach home and get the party going. Being married in service for nearly thirty years then, I was confident that the support system was so good to manage the impossible. The party started as if we were doing nothing else that Saturday. The scotch eggs were a hit and so was the party.

The PSOs and senior officers from Command bounced the party that night, to wish us happy birthday on our second life. It's only then that I realised the magnitude of our adventure. ■

(The author is married to Air Marshal C Hari Kumar (ret'd), the man behind Op Bandar, the strike at Balakot)



The party finally begins

My Experiences with Rimcollians

— **SUCHETA GIDH**



We got married in Mumbai in 1981. Being from a civilian family, I had no idea about the Army and RIMC at that time. When I joined my husband Vijay Y Gidh for the first time in 1982, he was posted at Along on deputation with Assam Rifles. I had a very nice experience of RIMC brotherhood bonding there.

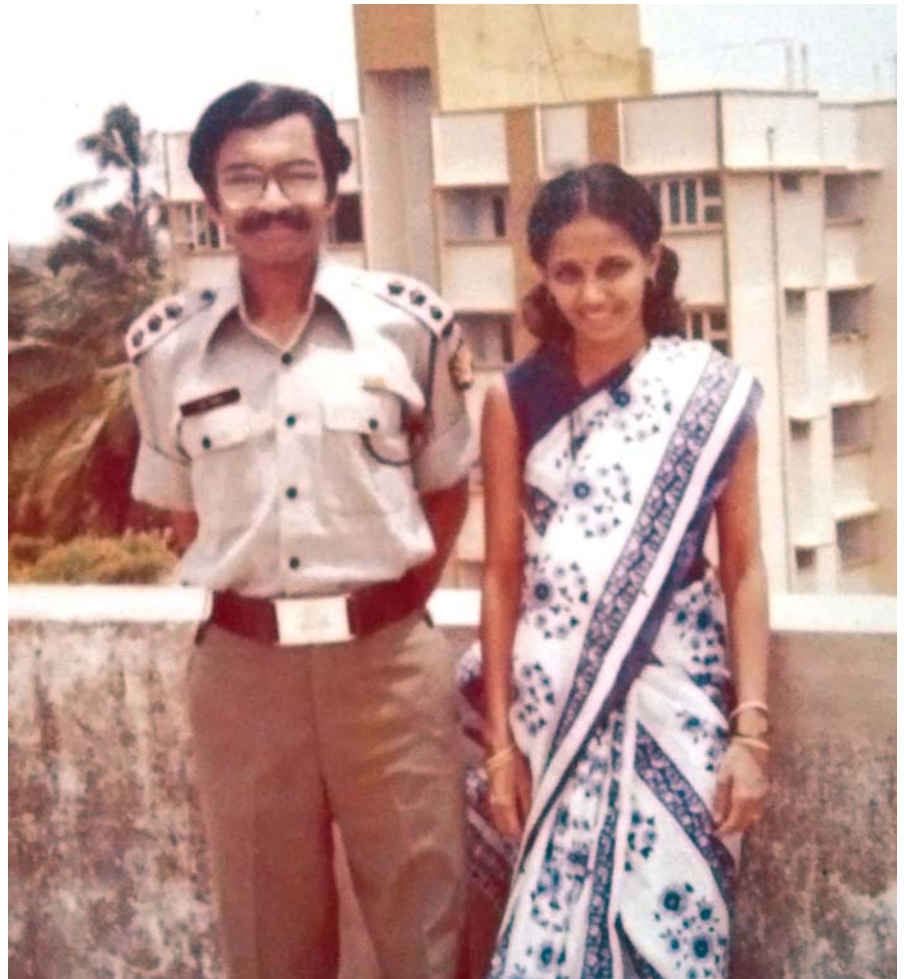
I was carrying my first child (a Rimcollian - Varun). Along was a very remote place, where simple things like Cadbury chocolate or Amul butter were not available there. Having come all the way from Mumbai, I had a craving for these things in those months.

The Indian Air Force used to be dropping supplies to the Assam Rifles posts located on the border. At times, they would land at Along on their way back to Chabua or Jorhat. One of my husband's friend - Flt Lt HS Sandhu, a Rimcollian, was a young pilot then.

Sandhu once visited us at Along; he asked if there was anything we required. When I informed him about these requirements, he willingly used to get us items from Dibrugarh. One cannot imagine the pleasure I got at that time, receiving these simple things. Hats off to the Rimcollian spirit! This was my first experience of Rimcollian bonding.

We were unable to visit RIMC until Vijay got posted as Adm Officer in 1994. Though I had stayed with my husband at some of the places he was posted, the Appointment House which we got as Adm Officer in RIMC was the biggest one which we had stayed so far. The Commandant, Col DH Parab had been Vijay's instructor in NDA. His wife, Gita, was the most helpful lady I have met.

We had a lovely tenure in RIMC, those were the most eventful days in my



The newly married Gidh Couple

life. We visited many beautiful places nearby, at times with the junior cadets. During a trip to Chakrata with the first termers, my daughter, Mukta and me were travelling with Col Parab and Gita. The scenery was beautiful with pine trees, the tallest in Asia. The road was dangerous but Col Parab loved to drive at the same speed as in the plains of Doon! We also accompanied them for White River Rafting, which was a

wonderful experience.

The neighbouring school was Doon School. Many ex-students, some of them big shots, would attend their annual function. Once during one such function, after dropping the big shot in Doon School, the pilot had to return to Delhi. Being a Rimcollian, he decided to visit RIMC. He was granted permission to land the helicopter in the Cricket Pavilion. Before leaving for Delhi, he



The sprawling Administrative Officer's Bungalow at RIMC

gave a joy ride to Gita, me and Mukta. It was our first experience of sitting in a helicopter - a memorable experience.

Vijay purchased his first car in RIMC - a second hand Maruti 800, which was a luxury those days. I learnt car driving in RIMC, though at the cost of breaking many flower pots in front of our neighbour's houses and the Cadets Mess!

We had a nice garden in front of the AO's House, with many kinds of trees. Apart from a pipul tree, were many fruit trees like litches, mangoes, guavas and king-sized bananas, that we call Rajelikeli in Marathi. The cadets were aware of these trees and used to pluck the fruits in their free time after seeking permission.

Our son Varun joined RIMC and stayed in a dormitory. Once during Holi,

we had gone to wish the Commandant. Our house was open and I had made 50 odd puranpolis (sweet rotis, flat bread), cut them in half and laid them on the dining table. When we returned home, we were surprised to find that the junior cadets had come home, finished all the puranpolis, then opened the fridge and polished off all the chocolates or other eatables! The cadets are the heart of RIMC. When they proceeded home during the term break, the campus gave a deserted look.

Our stay in RIMC was very comfortable, thanks to the efforts of our Group D employees, to whom we are grateful. They were skilled in their job and used to work with full dedication and passion. The mali, cook, safaiwala, dhobi, tailor, etc, were all the backbone of the fine institution.

Vijay went on posting to a UN mission in Angola. Our daughter was studying in Cambrian Hall; so we moved to Separated Family (SF) accommodation, near RIMC. Vijay assumed command of his unit and was posted to field thereafter for four years. So we continued to stay in SF for a good period. It was very kind of Col Parab and later Col Arun Mamgain, who took over from Col Parab, to look after us. We were invited for all programs at RIMC.

The Masters in RIMC were a fine lot. I remember when our daughter, Mukta was in senior classes, she wanted some coaching in mathematics. When Mr LN Thakur, Vijay's old maths teacher learnt of it, he volunteered to teach her. Mukta used to cycle all the way at times to Mr Thakur's place in the afternoons for her extra classes! Mukta is a teacher today in Pune and loves teaching her young children.

Whenever we visited RIMC during the Reunions, it was always a pleasure to visit the AO's House. It brought fond memories of our lovely stay in RIMC! RIMC occupies a special place in my heart, being a Rimco wife and mother. ■

(Sucheta Gidh is married to Col Vijay Yeshvant Gish (ret'd) and a BA (Economics) from Mumbai University and MA (Marathi) from SNTD University, Pune. She also is a learned scholar of Bhagwad Gita)

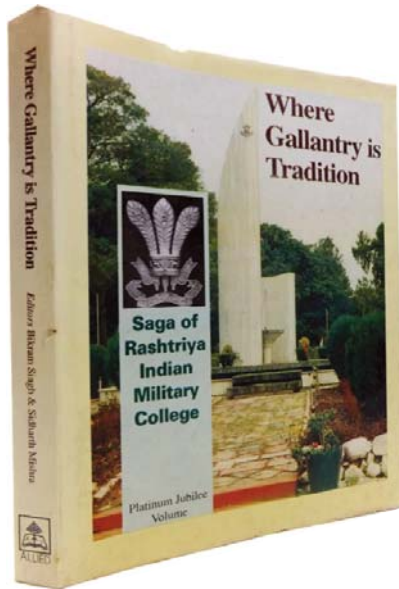


Making of A Book Also A Marriage

— DR DIPTI MISHRA



The author recalls how she spent her days soon after her marriage seeing making of a book for a cause, which came to be part of her life



In May 2021 we celebrated silver jubilee of our marriage. So, I can say that its silver jubilee year for me to be part of the Rimcollian community. It was in late March 1996 that we had first met at Bengali Market in New Delhi. Sidharth's parents had come from Bihar, as had my parents and we were staying at Gomati Guest House of Jawaharlal Nehru University in Bengali Market besides the FICCI House.

In that first conversation we had, Sidharth had talked about his school's annual alumni get-together he had attended some days ago at the Modern School nearby. I had wondered what's the big deal about the alumni not meeting in Dehradun and instead in Delhi. Don't the alumni of a school meet in different places! little did I then realise that for this man and many more of his ilk it was like annual pilgrimage and that RIMC was going to be part of my life now, even my honeymoon.



Dr Bir Khurana and Col Jasbir Khurana, the first Rimcollian couple the author met on reaching Delhi after her marriage

I would come to marriage and honeymoon later, first let me relate to you my very pleasant introduction to the Rimcollian fraternity. On reaching Delhi after spending more than a month in our country home, we were invited for a very sumptuous Sunday brunch by Lt Col. Jasbir Khurana and Dr Mrs Bir Khurana at their Defence Colony house. On asking who the host was, Sidharth had left me in a maze saying that he was his editor.

Hullo! isn't the editor of the newspaper where he worked was someone else? It was now time to learn that there was another publication in his life, the old boys' newsletter, *The Rimcollian* and that Col Khurana was editor of this publication. I wondered how he be so serious about an alumni newsletter. But I was learning to better not ask some question about RIMC and the ways of the Rimcollians.

At Col Khurana's house we also met a



Then President Shankar Dayal Sharma releasing the book titled *Where Gallantry is Tradition*, edited by Bikram Singh & Sidharth Mishra in the presence of ROBA president Gen VN Sharma (retd) on 13 March 1997.

very tall and smart gentleman Lt Gen HRS Mann, who possessed an excellent sense of humour. I had wondered, why didn't Sidharth make me meet people of his age as everyone that I got to meet 'from school' was my grandfather's age - Maj Gen Virendra Singh, Maj Gen TV Manoharan, the few names that I readily recall. I was told that since most of his contemporaries were away in the border areas, I was unlikely to meet them till they start getting their 'Delhi postings'.

Before I move further, let me share with you how the man robbed me of a honeymoon by the seaside or on a hill station by persuading me to stay at our

huge country home at Ara in Bihar. In the run-up to the marriage me and my parents found it very awkward to share the name of our honeymoon destination. He had said that he wanted to spend time on the moonlit night under a Peepul tree, which arched over the roof of his ancestral house with me besides him. It had all sounded so romantic.

I had then not realised he was a con artist, who had made me walk into a well-laid trap. On the second day after we had checked in into that house, which our in-laws had so lovingly decked up for us, he started spending time with some sheafs of paper which he had brought

along from Delhi. My mother-in-law would counsel me saying that he was working on an important book.

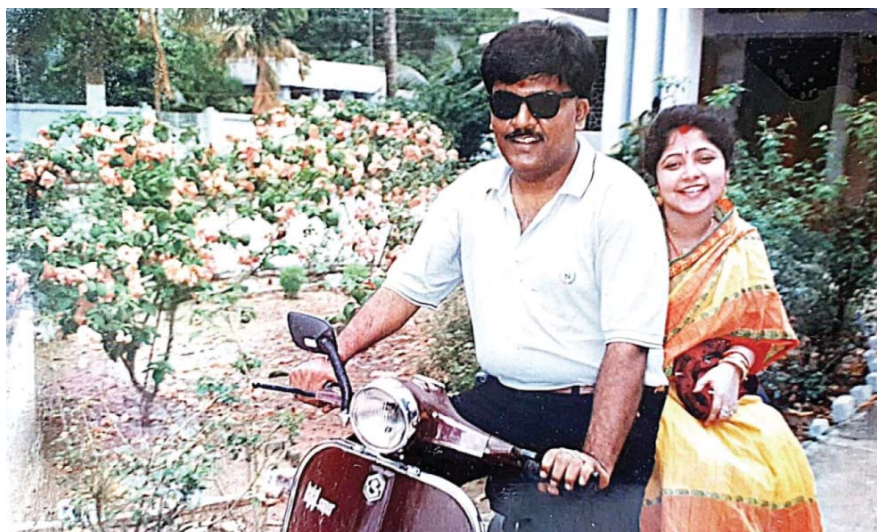
He would in the evenings carry the handwritten notes to a typist in the local court compound to get them neatly typed. So that's how the first draft of the *Where Gallantry is Tradition*, the Platinum Jubilee Volume, was made. On reaching Delhi at our 1BHK apartment, where the B was just the size of the bed, the first thing he did that evening while we went on a stroll to make a call from a public booth to Col Khurana that we were in Delhi, so was the first draft.

The invitations from Rimcollian elders followed soon thereafter. The finale of the round of introductions was the get-together at the grand Rajputana Rifles Mess in Delhi Cantonment area, where I was to meet many a gracious Rimcollian ladies to whom Dr Mrs Bir Khurana introduced me as Sidharth's bride. Some of these ladies made a great impact on me over the years specially the way they carried themselves.

But to be fair to the man, we did spend some memorable moonlit nights under the Peepul tree, whose leaves made searing sound even in very light wind. I would often sing to myself and sometimes to him, the lines from poet Gulzar's famous Nazm, *Dil Dhoonta Hain*, which goes somewhat like this, "*Yaa garmiyon ki raat; Jo purwaayiaan chale; Thhandi shafed chaadaron pe jaagen der tak; Taaron ko dekhte rahen, Chhat par padehuye; Dil dhoondhtaa hai; Phir wahi fursat ke raat din.*"

I could not attend the Platinum Jubilee as I was carrying our first child but prayed that the book, for which he had worked so hard, did well. He returned with a twinkle in eyes, sharing the cover of a local newspaper - Garhwal Post, which had his picture with General Vishwa Nath Sharma, Mr Bikram Singh and Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, our President releasing the book. ■

(The author is a music scholar and painter, married to Mr Sidharth Mishra, 115th /Ranjit, a veteran media person and long-time publisher of The Rimcollian)



As newly married at our country home in Bihar in 1996. Please don't miss the Bajaj Super Scooter

My Introduction to RIMC

— SONI SANGWAN



“So, how many students are there in RIMC?”

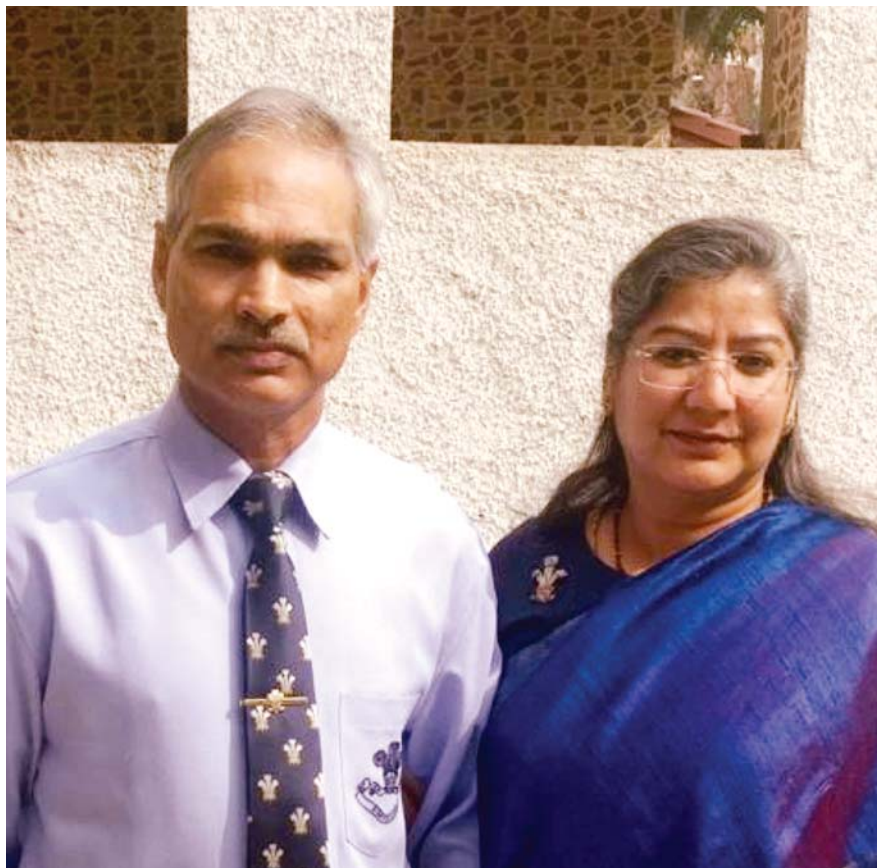
“Two hundred and fifty.”

“In every class?”

“No, in the entire school.”

This was my introduction to the Rashtriya Indian Military College. We had been married for a few months and I was travelling from Mussoorie to Delhi. I had stopped at Dehradun and had a few hours to kill before my train. Sandy (Maj Gen Sandeep Singh) had suggested I visit the College while I was there and had entrusted the task of giving me the tour to his friend Steve (Brigadier Steve Ismail; Pratap Section).

Steve and I had met earlier in Delhi so he was not a complete stranger and happily we began our tour. One of the masters was showing us the classrooms and I asked the opening question. Coming from Delhi Public School, I was used to the concept of each section of a class having more than 50 students and each class having up to J sections, so my follow-up question was quite legitimate.



Author with her husband Maj Gen Sandeep Singh



The author during her maiden visit to RIMC with then cadet captain

Let it suffice to say, the answer - “Two hundred and fifty in the entire school” - left me gobsmacked. It was the first indication that RIMC is something special. Don’t get me wrong, I knew that I was married to a special man even before I learnt that Sandy is a Rimcollian, but this was hard, physical evidence.

The man I married earned a lot of his character points from the years spent here, along with several of his stitches and scars. Before Steve took me to the famous board where Sandy’s name figured as Cadet Captain First

Term 1985, we were standing at the famous window of the Senior Ante Room looking out to the Quadrangle. As we discussed how tough life had been at RIMC, he started talking about how valuable the training here was, especially when it came to negotiating the rough and tumble of front rolling as first termers in NDA.

“The RIMC front roll technique gives us an arm’s length advantage,” he said, before proceeding to the quadrangle to actually show me the difference. There we were - a visitor and a full Colonel of the Indian Army, one observing seriously



The famed get-together at Hyderabad (Below) The Scotch Eggs

as the other demonstrated the front roll technique of using your extended arms to give yourself a boost rather than starting with your head first.

Josh is an understatement when it comes to describing a Rimcollian. When it was our first Founder's Day as a couple, I got to witness the pull that brings so many Old Boys to their old haunt. So much so, guest rooms are hard to come by in the entire station. One *joshila* Rimcollian, unable to obtain a guest room, decided to camp on the grounds. He brought his regimental caravan and parked it here for the duration!

Another time, we were in Secunderabad and when we had a Rimcollian Get Together at home, one of our guests came despite having a leg in plaster cast, such was his spirit. I have seen Rimcollians open their homes to each other everywhere we have been -



true believers of *mi casa su casa*. In Jakarta, too, a Rimcollian was among the first to welcome us there. Though a bachelor, he sure knew how to entertain!

Though it is always a delight to host Rimcollians - all they want is scotch eggs and coffee mould - it is even more satisfying to feed current students. We got a chance to host the debating team from school when they came to Lucknow. Of course, the food tasted better because it was seasoned with the taste of victory - the team had won the prestigious Claude Martin Memorial Debate trophy defeating hosts La Martiniere.

No trip to Dehradun is complete without a visit to RIMC and it always feels like a homecoming. Over the years, every visit reveals something new. The core values remain the same, the infrastructure evolves to keep pace with new technology but the eagerness and earnestness in the eyes of the cadets remains the same. ■

(The author is a former journalist and married to Maj Gen Sandeep Singh 1153/S; 1980-85)

MY ROMANCE WITH RIMC

— MRS MONISHA RASTOGI



Born & brought up in Meerut
With a stamp of a convent school
I took pride in calling myself a Sophian
Till I met this boy from Doon.

The pride in his eyes I remember
When he told me the name of his school
“Rimco”- he would proudly state his clan
Courageous, confident and cool

My first love letter was mailed
To Rashtriya Indian Military College
Addressed to Cdt Devanshu Rastogi, 1373/Shivaji,
In a colourful envelope, full of hearts..oh what an edge !

Marriage took us on our first posting to Kochi
The sky was overcast and accommodation nowhere to be seen!
And guess who helped me settle my first home
Rimcollians in Kochi, from Commanders to SLTs out of teens

A Rimcollian came to receive us at the Railway Station
As we started our married life
Cdr Vishwanathan, I fondly remember
With his loving and homely wife.
This was followed by more of his school types
Who helped us create beautiful memories in 1995.

The word Rimcollian
Is not just a simple word
It encompasses camaraderie
That’s hard to put in words.

When I visited the school, the first time
I stood in awe at its Tudor style
Whatever I had heard of the school
Proved more than right.

I don't think he enjoyed his honeymoon
As much as the visit to school
From the dorm where he stayed
To the classes that groomed him cool.

Before I met this Rimcollian,
Shivaji, Ranjit, Chandragupta, Pratap
Were just mere proper nouns for me

But later I understood
Those were not mere Sections in school
Those were epitome of lifelong bonding
And reason to cheer in any Rimcollian gathering

From Hawaii to Australia
I have seen the bonding strong
Just mention the word "Rimcollian"
And it does wonders even during mighty storms.
Their bonding is so special
They might well be goodwill ambassadors
Of Fevicol's tight bond.

Scotch eggs and coffee pudding
Makes them go weak in the knees
No matter how much the wife tries to make the dish
She is just unable to measure up or compete.

Only one advice for the young Rimcollian wives -
If ever you go to school reunion
Make sure you have friends by your side
Cos husband dearest will desert you
The minute he steps inside.
Matches, gossips, long lost friends
And memories that rekindle those bygone days
Sure makes them forget their loving wives.

Cheers to their camaraderie
Cheers to the wonderful school
May this bond grow stronger each day
Is all that I can ask for and pray.
I am proud to be a Rimcollian's wife
And take pride to walk by his side.

God Only Knows, My Heart Will Go On

— WING COMMANDER **TARUNA SINGH**



Thirtieth August Two Thousand Twelve,
We began a journey new,
Nine years flown by,
Since the day I stayed back on earth
And you joined the sky.
You never said you're leaving
You never said goodbye,
You were gone before we knew it
And only God knows why.
The fact that you are no longer here
Will always cause me pain
If only I could have you back
For just a little while



Then we could just sit and talk again.
 Life has been testing,
 Through trials and tribulations, it has not been easy

But I must thank you
 For the legacy of RIMC family That you left behind...
 I always thought its only about old boys,
 Till they all came like a blessing and solace I need,
 They helped me move forward, beyond my pain
 Each brought a light to my dark days
 Always there when I was feeling down
 Listening to what I have to say
 Finding a way that will make me smile Reminding that I am loved and cared
 Inspiring me to go extra mile
 Encouraging to rise up above
 Never wanting to make me feel sad
 Doing all that they possibly can Saying what is good, not what is bad
 And taking the time to give me a hand.
 All these things and so much more

**And shown me what this family truly means, I express my love and gratitude
 to blessing called RIMC, And wish them good health and happiness as I pray.**

Loss has taught me many things
 And now I face each day
 With hope and happy memories
 To help me on my way.
 So rest my angel, be at peace
 And let your soul fly free One day I will join your glorious flight
 For all eternity.

(Wg Cdr Taruna Singh is wife of late Wg Cdr Vikram Singh 127th/Pratap)

BOXED TO GLORY AND BEYOND

— **RENUKA SHARMA**



It was a regular spring term dinner when a Class IV A senior came to his chair and whispered “Eat less; you have a selection bout after this for 30-33kg weight category”. It was the last thing he wanted to hear. What could lie ahead were gruesome and un-merciful days full of sweaty and beaten moments and no more desserts (including the coffee pudding that lay in front of him).

He never knew that the two round bout in front of Sec Com’s room was going to open for him the feared world of punches and all the ruthless preparation that goes with it for the next coming nine years. What more he didn’t know was the name he would earn amongst all those who would know him personally and also amongst his many contemporaries in the Training Academies.

His first competitive bout was in his Class IA for the lowest weight category, probably under 30 kgs. I wonder seeing present kids that how come someone aged around 14 can ever weigh so featherily light and he tells me that he also had the improbable task of shedding a kg plus from that ultra skinny body to come into the permissible limit. He won the weight and the sweetest moment he recalls was sipping the coke + juice + some undisclosed alcohol cocktail from the boxing trophy his section had won that term.

GLOVES, GUM SHIELDS AND MEDALS

At RIMC

In the five boxing terms he grew as a cadet (but marginally in weight) and represented his section in different weight categories. He often says that



BOXING CHAMPS

there can be no other school which can provide a child the basic tenets and opportunities to learn something new and exploit their unknown potential. The school, he says, is blessed with the capability to bring out and harness the best qualities in any child. He accepts that boxing never came naturally to him but credits its foundation in him to all whose contribution, he felt, was immeasurable. From the seniors in school who injected the spirit to win the prestigious boxing trophy, to the then Commandant who during practice sessions often went around giving boxing tips, to the college boxing coach (the first Indian to win Asian Boxing Gold Medal), to the section mates who passed their pancakes and puddings on winning section bouts or cheering their lungs out and lastly to all his worthy opponents who were equally good, competent and spirited.

When, few years back, I asked him to display his victorious boxing pictures he humbly refused, probably out of respect and the spirit towards his opponents.

In his five years at RIMC he went on to win his weight three times and lost twice in the finals (once in Class IIA

and next in Class IIIA where he was but adjudged the best loser). In his final term at RIMC he won his weight and the best boxer (most Scientific/ Technical boxer) and was awarded the prestigious Full Blue in Boxing.

At NDA

In order to wriggle out of some physical ‘ragda’, he says, he had thought on how to put a facade to battle out at least the initial few terms at NDA and specially boxing. Little did he know his Rimcollian seniors were a step ahead and the most common & lame knee/ back pain excuses were kicked out of Kondhwa Gate even before the first week at NDA could finish. He soon was part of his Squadron Boxing Team. Having enjoyed Class VA, having watched Football World Cup (1994) during the extended period before joining NDA and with only 2-3 weeks of preparation for the Inter Squadron Boxing Championship, he admits that fielding him to box was not a good idea. He lost in his 1st term quarter finals. What he gained was the knowledge that boxing at NDA needed only some more stamina. He proudly says that the best boxing standards in terms of technique



TWO RIMCOLLIANS AT NDA



and quality of bouts at any training institutes was undoubtedly at RIMC. He says that is why the Rimcollian boxers at NDA & IMA always dominate every weight, every bout. The only flip side is when Rimcollians fight one another.

During our family visit once to NDA he showed us the NDA Science Block Gym where bouts were held. All his NDA course mates and contemporaries, on being introduced, always bring out his boxing skills and don't miss telling how they used to look forward to see his bouts. He won his weight category in the NDA 3rd term. His final bout for the gold medal at NDA in his 5th term was against his own Rimcollian course mate. Both, he tells, had to be warned by the referee to actually box and not just goof around sparring. He still feels his loving course mate was generous to let him take the bout. He was adjudged the best boxer that term and was awarded Full Blue at NDA (second time in boxing).

RIMCOLLIANS WITH FULL BLUE CERTIFICATE (5 OUT OF 7)

At IMA

At IMA too he went on to win all his bouts and the weight category, probably



Bantam weight by then. He recalls, it was a proud moment for him to receive the Gold and also the best boxer medal from a spirited Rimcollian, the then Commandant IMA. At IMA also he was awarded the coveted Full Blue in Boxing (the third time). People known to him and the sport often say that he may be one of the rare few (if not the only one) to have earned 12 boxing medals till IMA and awarded Best Boxer and Full Blue at all the three institutions aka RIMC, NDA & IMA. But he says that he is probably not sure of this feat because there are many who have tread this path before, few alongside him and many who would have after him.

LIFE'S LESSONS IN THE RING

He confides and says the moments he has spent inside the 20x20 ft enclosed ring has taught him some very important and valuable lessons which he frequently tells his kids also. Firstly, he tells that in boxing to get those winning points you have to take up the risk/ challenge to get close to your opponents, which more often than not will ensure getting some counter punches. He says even though it's a physical oriented sport (with punches landing on face) but has to be played, like any other thing, with an open mind and by committing yourself into your opponent and the challenges.

Secondly and most importantly he says that the last 30 - 45 seconds of the last round, when both boxers are barely able to even move or punch and the feeling that its over anyway, is actually the game changing moment. The boxer who doesn't let it go despite his chips, stamina, technique & spirit exhausted gets to raise the hand victoriously. And so in our life too, very often similar situations keep coming, be it during the last one - two months of any preparations for exam, or in the last



quarter of any competitive match or during some bad phase in life, the mind would cry out loud to just give up and accept the result but it is then who fights and punches out these defeatist feelings and doesn't give up emerges with his hand in the air.

MY GRATITUDE

I thank RIMC for giving him the opportunity to receive those early blows and the set and temper to take on his opponents and the life's battle victoriously. If I extrapolate this I feel convinced that Rimcollians are people who have, in general, endured adversity, are humble in life and as a result more open, compassionate and real.

Proud and privileged to be part of this Fraternity. Ich Dien. ■

*(The author is married to Lt Col
Kartikeya, Sharma,
133rd/Chandragupta)*



RIMCOLLIAN AS MENTOR

— DR SONALI ROY PAUL



It is indeed a moment of great honour and pride to get one's son admitted into prestigious institution like RIMC. That memorable day came into our life on the 23rd of July 2009. My son (175th course) joined the institution on this memorable day in Shivaji Section. He was so keen and motivated to join his Alma mater that he prepared himself for the extremely competitive examination in a short span of time.

RIMC is a great institute and my respect for this institution grew manifold to see the transformation in my son in a span of merely few months. I expected him to be the same irresponsible boy. But no, he had transformed into a responsible youth taking initiative in every small and big matters. The first few words he spoke to me after his first vacation were "Ma, I am very happy there, I am grateful to you all for being generous enough to send me into such a wonderful institution". It was indeed a great relief for me. The values they cherish are remarkable.

Ladies next to their Rimcollian husbands are smart; to have a Rimcollian son besides is great and to be taught by a Rimcollian Professor at the post-graduation level is even more an amazing experience.

I am really privileged to have met a Rimcollian much before I got married. Late Dr DS Babu(1941-1947) of the Robert section was one of the finest teachers in my entire educational journey. This small write-up is just a token of gratitude for my teacher who happened to be my friend, philosopher and guide. Besides, being a vibrant well-versed teacher; he was an ardent



Dr Sonali with Dr DS Babu during her post-graduation

lover of nature; an academician par excellence; a qualified counsellor; an excellent mentor and above all the best friend to his students.

His outstanding personality

reflected his unique Public-School Training. His annoyance with inattentive students was met by fag-end of the chalk being chucked at his targets. But all his students

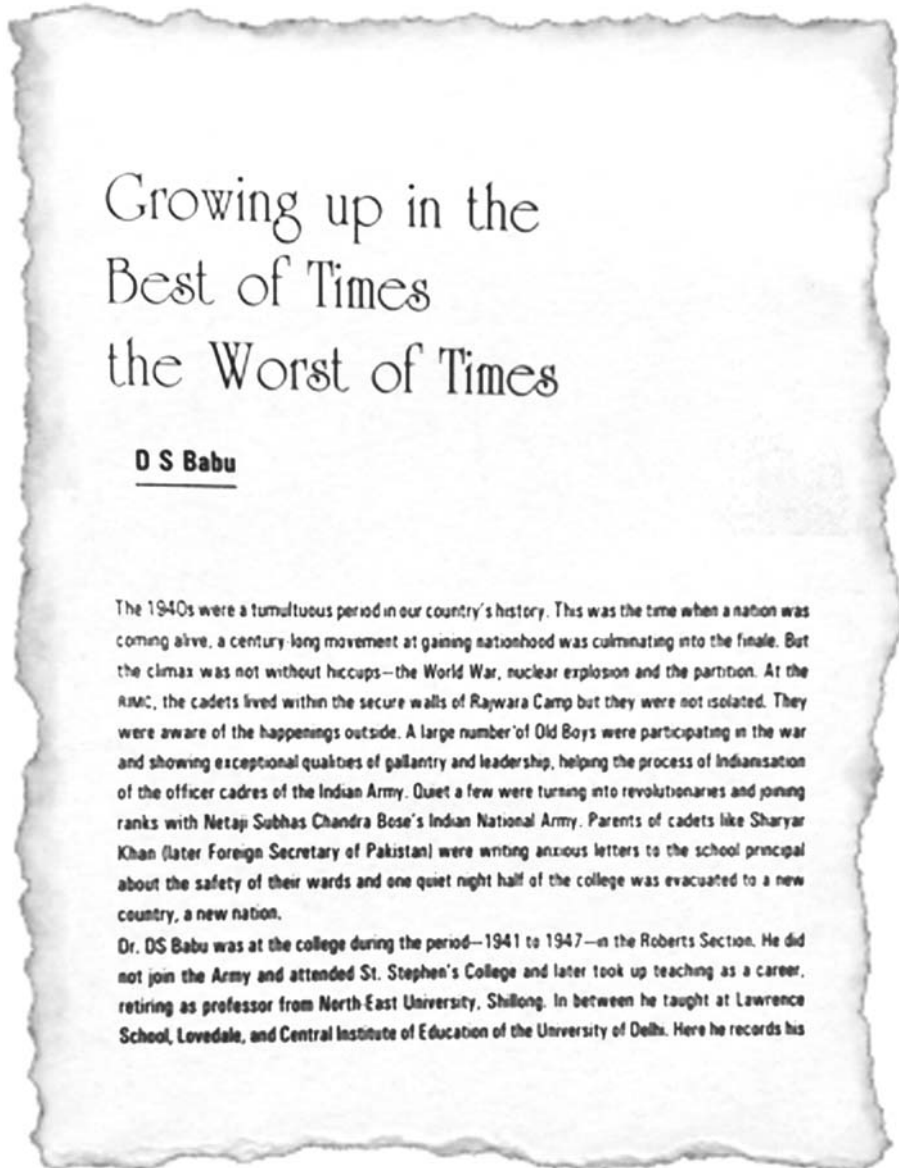
unanimously agree that Dr Babu played a pivotal role in shaping and moulding us. Majority of his students have taken up teaching as their career in the under-graduate and post-graduation level. We all go to the classroom with Dr Babu as our Role- model. I have been following his footsteps religiously all through my long career but then I could hardly match his stature.

As he wished The Department of Education North Eastern Hill University initiated an award for the student scoring highest in Research Methodology (the paper exclusively taught by Dr Babu) with the corpus fund of one lakh he left behind for the Department. That reflected philanthropic side of his personality.

Like all Rimcollians he never discussed his personal life nor his early educational background but definitely stood apart in the crowd with an excellent sense of humour. We were all attracted to his sandwiches, which he lovingly prepared for his dear students though was a bachelor. Later, when my son joined RIMC I recollected that all Rimcollians had a special fondness for bread. I came to know that my much-admired teacher was none but a Rimcollian from his article "*Growing in the best of times the worst of times*" published *Gallantry is Tradition* (The Platinum Jubilee Edition). I wish I had preserved some of his correspondences with me on various occasions.

I still have one more feather to add to my crown. My little knowledge about RIMC and its mess always made me the winner of all Quiz competitions organised during Rimcollian meets in Shillong.

I have to personally thank the anchor Captain Batla of the Shivaji Section (met him at a get-together in October 2008, extremely sorry as I do not know his initials or have not spelt his surname correctly). At this Rimcollian Meet in Shillong he prophesied, "Ma'am will be the proud mother of a successful Shivajian." I vehemently objected to the statement and all Pratapians present seconded my opposition as they had their own



Excerpted from *Where Gallantry is Tradition* (Ed. Bikram Singh & Sidharth Mishra; Allied Publishers)

reservations about Shivaji Section. I knew it is an established tradition of RIMC -- A Pratapians' son will always be Pratapians. His golden words, however, did come true. I actually became the proud mother of a Shivajian.

On arrival at RIMC we found Colonel H Dharmarajan then Commandant had already arranged every minute detail for the grand entry of my son to Shivaji Section. We were surprised but did not protest much as we were late and the Section had by far the best House Master - Mr SK Tyagi. I fail in my words to express my

gratitude for late Tyagi Sir who insisted on our next visit to RIMC that we visit his quarters and have a cup of tea with him. He would always pacify my apprehensions about my son in our regular telephonic conversations. His early demise was indeed a great loss to the cadets.

Long live RIMC and the unique Rimcollian bondage. ■

(Dr. Sonali Roy Paul is married to M. AKPoul1967-71, Pratap Section and the mother of Capt Orkhodiip Paul (2009- 2014) Shivaji Section. She is teaching at Women's College, Shillong.)

THE ENDLESS SPIRIT OF ICH DIEN

— MEHAK DALAL NEGI



I looked through the scope of the Assault Rifle and found my love on the other side of the barrel. Locking the “dot on target”, I had my “one shot, one kill”. Hailing from the same background, this young Rimcollian was commissioned into my father’s battalion in the end year 2008. The assault rifle plays the metaphor for Infantry. Undoubtedly, I have known one Rimco and it seems more than enough for me to figure out this creed of men.

“A lone survivor in a deserted land carrying oasis in his heart.”

As we became friends through my association with Paltan and his profession. A prolonged friendship turned into relationship. It only it made me wonder, how our stars crossed and the cupids played their roles. Crediting my high spirit for Infantry inherited and his lucid fundamentals blended with near perfection.

A college-going girl perplexed between ideology of Brontë sisters and DH Lawrence found her romanticist rooted from Lord Alfred Tennyson and Thomas Hardy. He helped me out with my projects on “the Charge of the Light Brigade” to a cheerful light-hearted poem of “Daffodils” by William Wordsworth. I would often bowl him out by my latest knowledge of corps poured in by my father, the usual debates on courses of the arms, the good old squadron stories, the hearty camaraderie. He would talk about something that I already knew. But then, every individual has his own set of tales to tell and experiences to share and I was all ears for that.

“He came forward with unwavering shine,

Not just to halt, to look back and whine.



The author with her husband Maj Ajit Singh Negi

*He set on the rumbling thunder,
Sliding through the winds and sailing
through the rumbles.”*

RIMCO FACTOR IN MY DATING LIFE

He gifted me a brooch engraved “Ich Dien” below the Ostrich Feathers on our

second date even before confessing his love to me and gearing up to ask me out. Quite confident that I would not turn him down. I have witnessed such School spirited officers in past but this nut case character surpassed them all. And audacious enough at the same time, asked me to wear it in main events of my

college which totally left my civilian friends dumbfounded. An unusual boyfriend one seldom got to see in the city beautiful, Chandigarh. And mind you, I did wear the brooch with pride.

Hardly two hours into meeting and one just starts off with "I have 22 brothers like course mates, I am from Chandragupta section, its called section, not house, mind that please. Have you ever been to Dehradun? My course mates are posted here and there, would you like to speak to them? These momos are pathetic here, I would take you to 'Chacha Momos'. And one can just go on non-stop, losing track of time, leaving me an avid listener on the other side. Whereas I changed over 6-7 schools, travelled the country side with my folks and couldn't connect well with friends I lost on the way.

Let's face it people, Rimcollians have endless struggle in having a girlfriend and they just can't let her go. It is a matter of great commitment and devotion in a long-distance relationship. A young officer hardly gets leave in his early years of service and to maintain a relationship for long is an arduous task. Similarly, in my case, he had to fly from Bhutan IMTRAT on regular intervals to convince me to stay strong for him during the two years of courtship. Luckily, a foreign tenure gave him ample leave to sort things out in our relationship.

A melodramatic hassle at the family front both the sides, culminating into a peaceful wedding at last. I absolutely adore the "never die, not today" attitude in him which I am sure must be a legacy from his school. After all, boys school continuously being fed with Bollywood movies like DDLJ, *Mohabbatein*, etc countless chick flicks. All are out their retrieving their "Simran's, Tina's or Anjali's", famously quoting that 'We live once, we die once and we love only once'. As a matter of fact, one starts with this fantasy and who knows how reality hits them in later part of their lives. Ours turned out to be customised little version of DDLJ.

So here we were four months post marriage and my first visit inside the

gates of RIMC, Dehradun. In no time, I discovered an adult 27 years old behaving like 14 years old inside the school premises, symptomatic of bipolar disorder. He introduced me to the cook and waiters who served him good food for 5 years starting from I to VA. There is no concept of 10th, 11th and 12th like a regular school. A detailed briefing around the Campus included tales of cadet's life revolving around Dormitory, Academic Block, Cadet's Mess, PT Ground, Sports fields and plethora of sites around. A mention of famous Capri cyber cafe where he and most of his termers discovered their so-called puberty post a good bashing session from 5A as one had been caught watching the 'Prohibited Stuff'. Curious were they to find out the reason behind that episode. Well, that reinforced the rule for life, 'If one is caught, the entire course gets to roll'. Not to forget, I was introduced to some *amazing rather innovative abusive words* I never knew existed in my urban dictionary, thanks to him. Swearing is like part and parcel of this 'creed of men', that too, trying their level best to maintain their poise in front of ladies. Apart from pun intended, hale and humour, an emotional childhood is spent together with their course mates who they place in high esteem. Something like "*Bhai ke liye Kuch bh*" (Anything for brothers). Displaying his course picture, of 5A and that too right on the top of the bar wall in our home, I wonder if he could have found a better wall. A metamorphosis of amphibians takes its course, the tadpoles turn into frogs.

I attended *My first 'Old Boys Meet'* in March 2015 at the Alma mater itself. An event held for two days, with fervour and vitality, to be precise. On 12th March, during Inter Section Boxing Finals, I clearly remember how he called me among the sitting arena of Chandragupta cadets beside the box ring to cheer the boxers. I also recall how irritated he got when I instead was inviting him to watch it from Shivaji Corner, which I felt was closer, not knowing that it was clearly a Sin, especially being the most Josh Type 'Section Spirited' event of the reunion.

The most nostalgic morning of reunion season, where in especially, cadets can feel the festive mood in the air while few others have a churn in their stomachs prior to weighing in (for the boxers). We went about walking early morning on the first day itself. Pleasant and magical it was, truly. The fun-filled morning of the 13th, from Cricket Match to Equestrian Show and interaction with all the old boys in the bustling pavilion was unforgettable. With little time to cool down, all Rimcollians were looking forward to the evening where in various innovative projects, section Boards were on display by Cadets closely followed by the mesmerising performance by them on the stage. And of course, the much-awaited awarding of the 'Championship Trophy'. All this followed by putting on the dancing shoes with the cadets at last. Lucky was I to meet all his old teachers, pillars of the College, whom I had in a way known by their pseudo names so far. Most readers already know and I can't let the 'cat out of the bag'. My first meet was marvellous and perfect in every sense.

THE CUISINE OF RIMC

The special menu of school is 'Scotch eggs, pancakes and coffee pudding'. The entire day, he just won't eat much to keep space in his reservoirs for the feast awaiting that night. Therefore, this gave me a tip I would give to all Rimco wives. "Ladies! if you ever did a blunder and you are too high to say sorry to your man, it usually happens with me, just bake him some ounces of coffee pudding and trust me, you will land up in a win-win situation". The coffee pudding happened to be one of my initial recipes when cooking was an alien skill to me.

A journey that I have set upon being married to a Rimcollian has brought in numerous years to last but never the least. May the spirit of Ich Dien ever enshrine your hearts, the association of each individual grow stronger and mightier in days to come and inspire generations to be part of this unique creed called 'Rimcollians'. ■

(The author is married to Maj Ajit Singh Negi, 156th Chandragupta)

RIGOUR: FROM A DIFFERENT PERCH



—MAJ GEN H DHARMARAJAN

As always, one looks forward ever more eagerly to the Camphor Series. When finally delivered after a long wait, it certainly does not take long to literally devour it like the famous *chhole-bhatore* in our Cadets' Mess.

This one was different, and as Gen SVP Singh [SVP] states, touches a topic of indeed “*deep import for our school;*” kudos indeed to Sidharth Mishra [SM] for that daring move.

“*What makes the DNA of a Rimco so different?*” This was a candid question posed to me by a group of AEC instructors from IMA, who had come over to the College on a visit, when I was the Commandant. Simply “*nothing*” can psychologically discourage or adversely affect a Rimco in the most trying of circumstances, they added emphatically. It was a Rimcollian characteristic that one had uncannily noticed in numerous GCs who had trained under his keen oversight. Only a Rimcollian, he stated unequivocally, would effortlessly dust away the most acute “*trauma*” and emerge with a broad smile on his face, (“*laughing away the toughest of pains*” as Brig Mothi Jacob [MGJ] puts it) ... to nonchalantly labour on towards the next challenge at hand.

Study teams continue to visit the College from all over, to ascertain numerous aspects - is it something in the curriculum, cut-copy-pasting every single minute of the Daily Routine? Is it a different authorisation of rations, what exactly is drawn out in the “*Bill of Fare*” at the Cadets' Mess, how is it cooked in the Cadets' Kitchen, and don't be surprised ... even the dimensions of the benches in the Mess have been

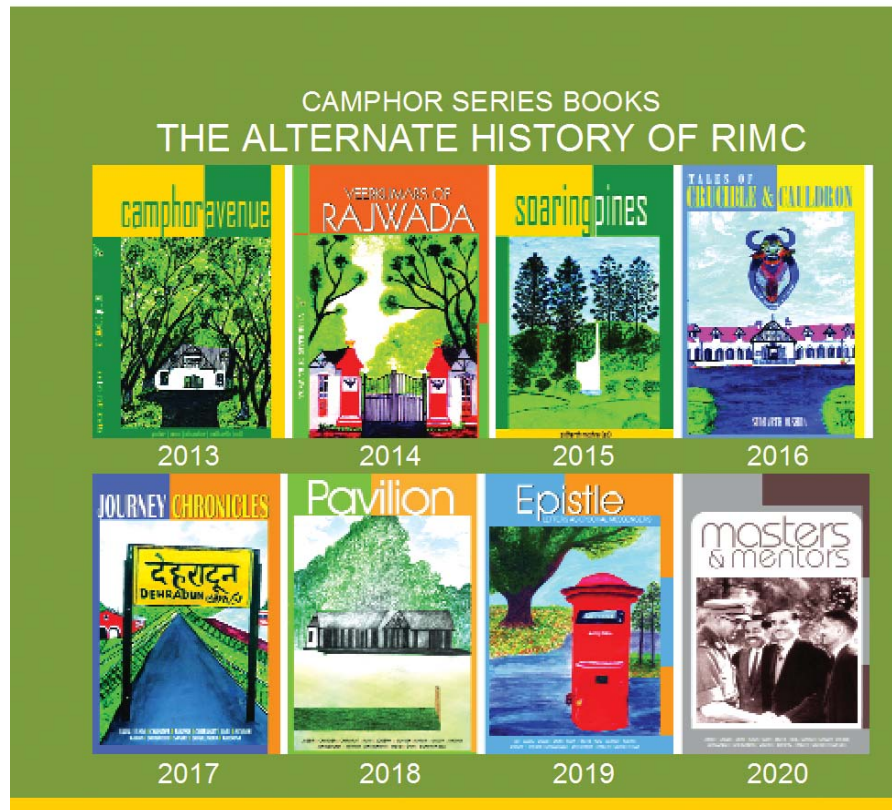
Rigour
Ragda which made us Tagda

ANANT | NARINDER | HARJEET | SVP | VIJAY | MOTHI | DEEPAK | ANIL
SUYASH | KARAN | AJAY | SANJAY | ASHEEM | KANVOTH | VIKRAM |
SHAILENDER | DHITISHMAN | PRAVEEN | GAURAV | SIDHARTH (EDITOR)

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replicated elsewhere. Yet the enigma of how the credentials of the College have stood out over the decades continues to mesmerise a plethora of establishments (and probably on many occasions, the Commandants themselves too!). To that extent, the “*Rigour*” shines like a beautiful compilation of sociological research for an award-winning thesis submission. If I had had a copy of the “*Rigour*” then as the Commandant, it would have been rather easy for me to hand those inquisitive IMA instructors the same for their “*education*.”

At the outset, almost every reader would identify in numerous ways with his own set of experiences. In *Rigour*, one finds a happy mix of Old Boy narrations, including at least one son of a Rimcollian, one father of a Rimcollian and even one husband of a Rimcollian! However, to me, one narrative stands out amongst the finely woven compilation - that pen-pusher who is also at the head of the College today - Col Ajay Kumar [AK], for he has the onerous task of being the Godfather of 250 sons who are at the receiving end of the *Rigour*! At each word of the narratives of the authors, my mind raced back not only to the times of being a cadet, but more recently so as the Commandant. That would put in perspective the subsequent comments of what it looks like from a different perch to view the daily goings on in the College in today's world. The operative question being, as Gp Capt Anant Bewoor [AGB] puts it, “*should we draw lines?*” Many an author has already alluded to the changing times, and I shall try to pepper my viewpoint with some of the observations made in this volume. For a brief moment, each of the writers themselves could actually ponder over what may have probably traversed the minds of the Commandants of their respective times. Some Commandants may have probably never known much about the life beyond, Col Harjeet's [HS] “*parallel universe*” or Col Sanjay Kannoht's [SK] “*unregulated sector*”, while the latter half of authors referring to the transformation under the Rimcollian



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Commandants have distinctly observed the transmutation. Indeed, for every head who knows, it is not easy to wear the *Commandant's Crown*.

Almost every writer in this volume has already pointed out, that the Camphor series is not just an ordinary compilation, it is more, as Col Vikram Kadian [VK] puts it, a “*time travel*” over the decades. When one walks through from the days of the British Commandants/ Principals (particularly, with the likes of AGB getting further back to the times of Gen Bewoor in the 1920s, and with [SVP] from Col Hari Handa/Gen NS Malik/Gen Mahanti in the 1940-50s), to the Rimcollian Commandants of today, one does get a glimpse of how our Alma Mater has evolved, including in the plane of *Rigour* too.

Reliving those five years while reading (six for some as [SK] puts it, who underwent the transition), over the five decades (1956-2006) covered in this edition, one gets a snapshot of how our definition of “*Rigour*” has subtly changed. That the essence has

been an enduring constant emerges directly, as a takeaway. But is it because the writers are all the success stories, as probably all readers are? Some authors have referred to the wastage rate who “left RIMC due to the Ragda” (Maj Gaurav Hridaya [GH]), of those who could not become “men.” Was it still possible that it could have happened differently, especially considering the tough selection and the miniscule entry window? For a Commandant, who also has to look at the tipping point of it all, at every stage ... how does he calibrate? Can he at the helm, knowingly ignore “the elephant in the room” [SVP], especially when aware of the stark episode described by Col VY Gidh [VYG]? How much of “bad treatment” can be quantified as adequate to “not scar,” yet contribute towards “character building” as Cmde Anil Joseph [NAJJ] puts it... can really have no easy answers.

Rigour makes for an absorbing read, and in one sitting, one can distinctly discern a common thread that prevails all through. That it has enabled us to “lead honourable lives despite difficulties” [SM], “changed us as human beings” [GH], made us “believe in one’s own capabilities” (Gp Capt Praveen Agarwal [PA]) in the voyage of self discovery [AK], helped us “handle the big bad world” (Wg Cdr Dhitishman Hazarika [DH]), taking “life’s challenges as a breeze” [VK], despite there being “more failures than successes” (Col Shailender Arya [SA]), highlights each as a profound transformation. The “weathering by repeated dashing of hopes” to build that “social formidability” [AGB], the ability to hold back the power of administering Ragda [AGB, MGJ, DA, PA], making “mental anguish inconsequential” [SK], the “mind not feeling the pain of the body” (Karan Bamba [KB]), the effect of incentivisation on the mind of the recipient (Col Sanjay Sinha [cSS]), willingly enduring [VYG] or starting to enjoy the toughening up [PA], sticking together in adversity (Cmde Asheem Mital [AM]), engendering that lifelong

bond of remarkable camaraderie (Brig Suyash Sharma [bSS]), the collective grind fostering bonhomie [VK], sticking together in adversity [AM] ... encompasses the larger context in adequate measure. Further, the chronological recording of experiences brings out that the nature of rigour within the precincts of the College may have subtly changed for the better, while thankfully, the character has not.

It would be appropriate to bring in a parental perspective here. Parents as major stakeholders in the development of cadets have always had an unfathomable insight into the College, especially non-Rimcollian parents (since many Old Boy Parents often have their omniscient expectations already exalted)! Rigour does touch upon this at places ... as to how certain parents lobbied hard for RIMC [MGJ], and how much parents saw their child mutate (Cdr Deepak Adhar [DA]). Every Parent, I realised as the Commandant, was actually amazed to see how their son was “growing”. They rarely found fault with the Rigour, were candidly thrilled to see the toughening up of their “good for nothing” kid [PA], earlier protected and pampered [cSS]. There was one parent who came over to me when I was the Commandant - he was crestfallen that he had to withdraw his son on medical grounds at an early stage, barely into Class II-A. He admitted frankly that his son had undergone an “incredible” and “impossible” transformation in a very short period of time. Many parents probably do not confide in this aspect of development with their sons, could be in the expectation of more to come. Each author, and many a reader may be able to identify this know thyself [PA] aspect through his parents even today, looking back at the times spent as a cadet. Most parents often got to easily comprehend that RIMC was not the textbook boarding-school happy relationship (Gen NS Brar [NSB]) between senior-to-junior. Despite how tough it must be for most parents to leave their son alone for the first time [VYG], especially in the initial years

with consistent motherly emotional blackmailing [MGJ], deep down they invariably realised that such experiential learning in unfamiliar territory would be impossible to replicate elsewhere. Yet, from a Commandant's perspective, each parent was entrusting the lives of their dearest in the hope that this rigour was controlled, and with a purpose [NSB] towards constructive development within the Rules of the Game [AGB], and not something as Col Mamgain pointed out that wasn't normal [GH].

Disappointments [AGB], be it accidental or by design, has been strikingly touched upon in many narratives. For the Commandant, besides Parent-Teacher Meetings (thanks to the inception under Rimcollian Commandants), it was the end-of-term report that officially reflected on each cadet, which contributed directly to the Cadet's Rigour. Even for the best of the best, it was a means to convey setbacks of different kinds, that the term was not always viewed with rose-coloured spectacles [SVP]. I attempted to find out what was it that was probably recorded in the end-of-term reports of our stalwart Chiefs. Were the reports of our famed Generals Bewoor, Thimmayya, ... et al always filled with glowing tributes? Dossiers at the College, particularly of the yesteryears were always revealing, critical, some hard-hitting, stinging to say the least. Imagine the mind of a teenager, who goes back home during the summer/winter break, to expect bouquets for his term-performance, yet finds his “secret” weaknesses laid threadbare to his parents. The deflating warning letters [DA] of weaknesses were in some ways an equaliser [DH] or a great leveller [NAJJ], indeed a part of mental toughening, noticeably absent in the flimsy fabric of some others who, today, cannot take critique nor seek it, in formal or even informal appraisals. The Commandant, the AO and the AAO are expected to be blunt where they ought to be, and the fact that they know so much about each cadet [PA] shapes

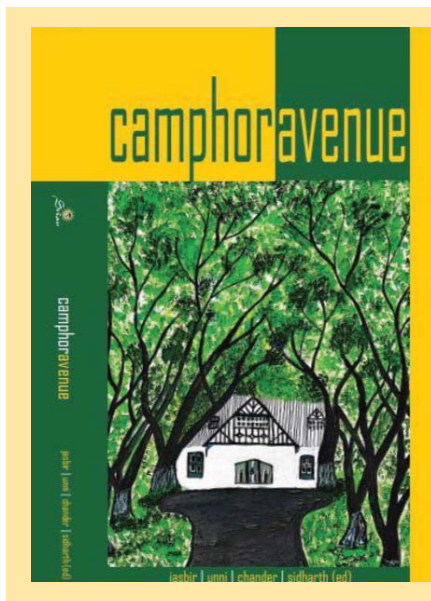


young minds at a tender age, in different ways - a takeaway of immense value.

The challenge that the Commandant faces today in the digital age is of greater concern. Where even a *rebuke can be taken to court* [NAJJ], old-fashioned Rigour for the *metamorphosis of boys into men* [AK] in the era of ragging helplines can immediately tarnish *the reputation of RIMC* [NSB]. As the Commandant, a small news-bit of a death by drowning in “*our*” swimming pool once raised a flurry of phone calls from all over the country. Imagine the panic button being pressed by 250 frantic parents near-simultaneously. It took a tremendous amount of effort to home in onto the erroneously reflected misrepresentation in the newspaper, consequent to the local police station presuming that it was an incident in our pool, while it was indeed another military pool. The newspaper was

DISAPPOINTMENTS [AGB], BE IT ACCIDENTAL OR BY DESIGN, HAS BEEN STRIKINGLY TOUCHED UPON IN MANY NARRATIVES. FOR THE COMMANDANT, BESIDES PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS (THANKS TO THE INCEPTION UNDER RIMCOLLIAN COMMANDANTS), IT WAS THE END-OF-TERM REPORT THAT OFFICIALLY REFLECTED ON EACH CADET, WHICH CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE CADET'S RIGOUR

forced to later insert a correction, albeit insignificant, but the larger writing was on the wall. I would often learn of an injury on the hockey field even before the cadet reached CH, from the parent himself/ herself, despite there being no cell phones with cadets. It needed only a missed call from the cell phone of the dorm bearer (acting as a stretcher bearer) to the cadet's folks back home, to tell them that all was well! In another incident, a cadet himself e-mailed me later, stating that I had wrongly presumed him to be the defaulter to undergo punishment, and that it was someone else 'unnamed' [not *snitching/squealing* [HS, SVP, SA], yet attempting to set the record straight] the world is indeed digitally much more transparent than I thought it was. The google wikimaps on the worldwide web once reflected a call out box over the Commandant's residence stating “*Com kuttahai!*” It did not take long to track the naïve cadet down even 15 years ago,



BAPTIZING A BOOK WITH CAMPHOR

While doing the first volume in 2013, we had realised that the call of the Camphor trees has been irresistible for several generation of Rimcollians as the invigorating fragrance it emanated played pied piper for a 90-year-old to a teenager, bringing back unbridled memories of a lively childhood spent on a pristine campus, which later in their lives became a state of mind. A photo of Camphor lined road was chosen for cover, but my better-half Dipti was not very happy about it. "A photo as cover for a magazine is okay, but a book should have a painting," she commented and volunteered to do the cover. It came out grandly and now the question were, what would be the title. "What's this road called," Dipti wondered, "Camphor Avenue," I answered. We had found the title. Little did we realize then that Camphor would become the title of a series of books which followed.

— Sidharth Mishra

and he later pulled it down (hopefully not visible today!). Cadets had to learn to adapt to the digital tracking of defaulters, as much as the MOS in their sincerity, besides the staff and the Administration itself in the permissibility of Rigour. With CCTVs, and feedback formats, tweets and texts flying on social media, there is indeed a new era of a different Rigour in place. For all, not just the cadets at the College alone, requiring a new level of mental agility!

It is evident that Rigour is fundamental to our producing of role models [AK] like a factory. How then does the Commandant decide on how much is enough? In every domain, in every sphere of activity, in every platonic plane of character-building, pushing that envelope to just short of a tipping point. The blend of beautifully woven narratives amply highlights how Rigour cannot be dished out as a one-size-fits-all, especially *outside the narrow confines of the Education Block* [HS], and that its differential impact on each has to be weighed in context. Not only the weak cadet [KB] but also those *who carved a niche* [BSS] for themselves have to both 'benefit' (with setbacks), so that it teaches them each to become wise to navigate in the cruel competitive world outside ... for it is that *emotional stamina to take it on the*

chin [AGB] that makes it more significant.

That intangible tipping point is somewhat equivalent to the optimum stress level (OSL) that every SSB attempts to gauge our cadet about, at the time of NDA entry. The Selection Centre discerns if that OSL is high enough for our cadet to prove himself beyond in the Rigour to follow in uniform? The unfathomable *battle between the ears, the resilience* [DA] to take on the worst *unfazed* [SK] without *venting frustration, blending it into a lifestyle* [cSS], turning that *serious consideration of leaving RIMC into a multiple-times gold medallist from a nobody* [GH], requires every Commandant to permit *semi-formal* [SA] *allowances* [SVP] while *setting boundaries*. The *adolescent curiosity* [DH] and the *thrill* of indulging in the *forbidden* [bSS] is something that would remain, and in a way teaches our cadet that life would be *chaotic, yet structured* [VK], to *handle fear of the unknown in all shapes and sizes* [GH], that there would be more sticks than carrots [DH] in the years ahead.

While *spicing up the proceedings* [AK], rather deliberately turning a blind eye to let the *footpath beside the path being paved* [MGJ], the Commandant with his prickly crown, has to make every effort to prevent

drop outs who find it *too hot to handle*. *Hypocrites* [AK] and the *hot-headed* [GH] may enable teaching a left-handed lesson to his juniors, yet the Commandant has to find a way to "*take care*" of them both, the *tormentor* [cSS] and the *tormented*. That sense in a cadet of *really wanting to get back home* [PA] is a turning point moment that the system has to help every valuable cadet get over. Followed thereafter by a constant shift of that OSL goalpost, that needs to be sensed at each stage. Eventually every cadet needs to achieve an overwhelming level of mental strength to *take everything in his stride* [SK]. *Pushing the limits of human endeavour* [HS] is a constant effort that the College Admin undertakes, leaving no stone unturned, even as the eyes are on the brakes where required. *Teenage-Tutors* [AK] tempering their senior's behaviour is a nice concept to take forward towards the common good. However, all *high-handed* [VYG] bullies [VK, DH] with their king-sized egos do not reform so easily. For a very small intake today, our fraternity size can fade away into further diminution in case the nature of our time-tested system, and nurture by timely intervention with *caution and sanity* [NAJJ] are not able to take every cadet along to his deserving destination.

Moreover, the sociology of Rigour in certain cases needs to consider the aspect of how new cadets who are single children of parents need further handholding to suddenly find themselves in a *diverse cultural mosaic* [SM] of a larger brotherhood with *symbiotic affiliation* [MGJ] to every other Rimcollian. That a success story for every handpicked cadet from every State of our Nation is possible over the five long years is a sense of conviction in the Administration forever. Notwithstanding, how it unfolds shall always remain a challenge.

One other aspect that needs consideration is the degree of deadening of our perceptions and sensitivities (in the process of character-building) towards other finer aspects while at the College. How much Rigour of keeping our 'eyes wide' [bSS] shut (yet awake) while trying to *stand tall always* [DA] contributes towards the lack of *admiration of the pristine forests or the exotic flowers* [SA]. Many a better half of the senior Old Boys often gheraoed and complained to me as the Commandant that there was something 'basically wrong in the fibre of all Rimcollians' (!) (may be worth showing this to your better half for veracity) ... that they were always indifferent to the niceties that the ladies expected them to observe. It could be taken as an eternal crib too, yet we did take upon ourselves the need for capsules on soft-skills, and understanding the fairer sex, for a few terms. Needs no amplification that these classes appeared a big hit. I wonder today if those sessions for a few terms did make any difference, especially when our cadets do not get the thrill of *swooning flowery tops and pleated skirts* [SM] ever later in their non-co-ed *all-boyz* career existence.

That Rigor is another collector's item as an alternate history [VK] is well established. That it raises a discussion on a serious matter that deals with our future leaders is even more poignant. The light at the end of the tunnel shown by all the writers is ample proof of eating the proverbial *ragda* pudding. That it cannot afford to begin drawing down as



While an unpublished manuscript for a debut novel gathered dust, Ateesh Kropha instead began posting original short stories anonymously on Instagram, under the pen name 'Wrongwriter', to seek feedback and work on his craft. Over two years and 50+ stories later, he has built a community of 10,000+ readers.

This is a curated collection of his best stories, along with some new unpublished ones.

Ateesh KROPHA
www.instagram.com/wrongwriter

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SCAN ME



Ateesh Kropha, Ranjit, 1997-2001, a young Rimcollian working in the corporate sector, is now an author with a readership of 10,000+ followers.

a penultimate edition in the Camphor series requires no added emphasis. A salute to all the writers, and obviously to the editor Sidharth for this exceptional addition to the collection. The Prince of Wales undoubtedly would smile from

somewhere above while reading this Camphor edition on Rigour! ■

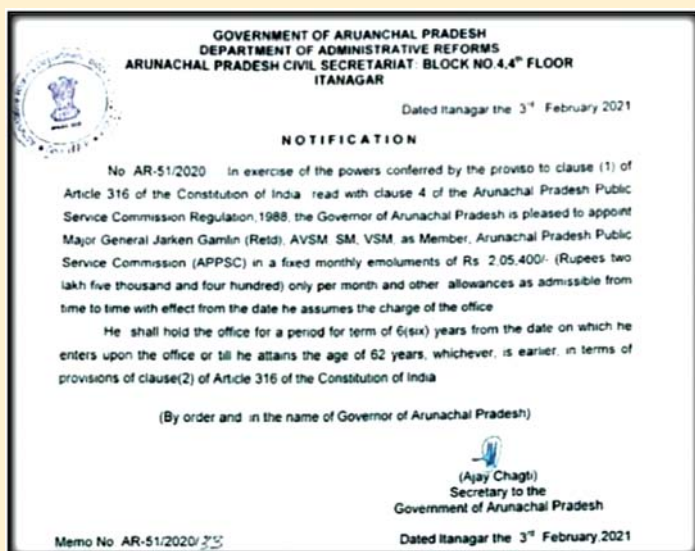
(The reviewer is from 113th/Chandragupta. He was Commandant of the school from 2007-2010)

QUICK FLIP

The VCOAS meets the NDA Merit list topper, Aditya Singh Rana



Lieutenant General CP Mohanty #VCOAS complimented Cadet Aditya Singh Rana #RIMC on securing All India Rank #AIR-1 in National Defence Academy & Naval Academy Examination, 2020. The Cadet will be the fourth generation in the family to have served in the #IndianArmy. His father Col Rana is also in the frame.



Maj Gen Jarken Gamlin appointed as a member of Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission for six years by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh

Lt Gen PNA Narayanan takes over the 'Gorkha Brigade'



Lt Gen AS Bhinder takes over as GOC-in-C S-W Command

SouthWesternCo... · 55m ·
#LtGenAmardeepSinghBhinder took over as GOC-in-C #SouthWesternCommand today at a solemn ceremony & paid tributes to #Bravehearts at #PrernaSthal, #Jaipur; He extended his greetings to all ranks of #SaptaShaktiCommand & their families.
@adgpi @SpokespersonMoD @PIB_India



Col Rajiv Ahlawat has added another feather to his cap. He has completed the Youth Fitness Specialist Programme, a key certification by American Council on Exercise

Indian Navy's Post

Indian Navy 8h · 🌐

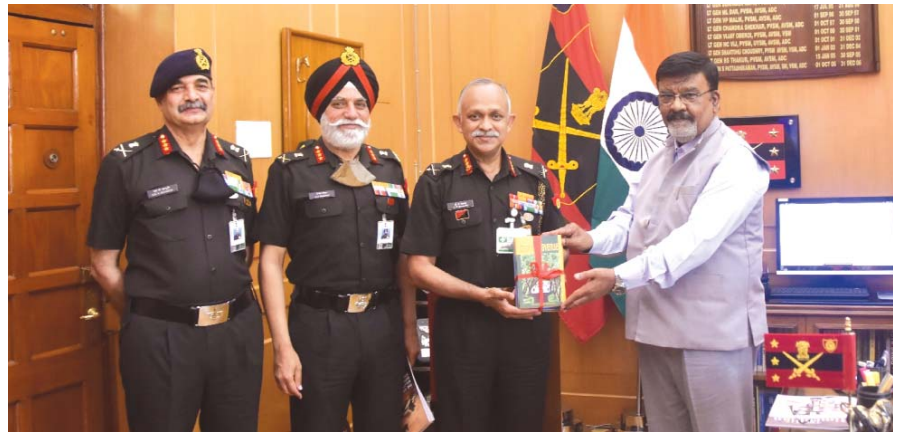
#HarKaamDeshKeNaam A Proud moment for India. Lieutenant Commander Suraj Aiyappa of the #IndianNavy was awarded Second Place in the national-level Secretary of Defense National Strategy Essay Competition across all Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) institutions in the U.S. In addition, he has been awarded two prestigious Writing Awards, including the Lt Michael P. Murphy Counterterrorism Prize and the Naval Staff College International Essay Award. He is also the only international officer this year to earn a Graduate Certificate in Ethics and Emerging Military Technologies from the US Naval War College.

👍❤️ Anil Jagtiani and 2.2K others 55 Shares

👍 Like 🔄 Share



Lt Cdr Suraj Aiyappa, while attending Staff College in USA, wins a prestigious prize. He secured second place in national level US Secretary of Defence National Strategy Essay Competition



Mr Sidharth Mishra gifted a set of Camphor Series books to VCOAS in his Office, South Block. Left to Right: Lt Gen Nav Khanduri, Lt Gen AS Bhinder, Lt Gen CP Mohanty and Mr Sidharth Mishra



Col Vijay Gidh & Lt Col Nayan Ghildyal, Adjutant NDA at the NDA Trishakti Gate. Lt Col Nayan Ghildyal, has now been selected as Assistant Military Attaché, China.

Sachin Kumar
Today, 17:03



बोलकर नहीं करके दिखाओ क्योंकि लोग सुनना नहीं देखना पसंद करते हैं।

Friends and folks, UPSC CAPF (ASSISTANT COMMANDANT) EXAM 2019 All India Rank 1. Thank you everyone for your warm wishes. When I look back it appears as if I am just a medium and it's my family, teachers, friends all well wishers who have made it happen. My heartiest gratitude to all of you.

Sachin Kumar has topped the UPSC 'All India Ranking' of CAPF Entry.



Arunabh Saxena, Chandragupta, 2009-II has won a gold medal in MBA at IIM-A and commences a promising corporate journey with Ishana Capital in Hong Kong

RIMCOLLIANS AT NDA

Rimcollians have been selected for all top appointments in NDA for the ongoing term.

- ACC Aseem Anand
- ACA Gaurav Prakash
- BCA 1 Aryan Dhama
- BCC 3 Harshvardhan

RIMCOLLIANS AT IMA

The following Rimcollian Gentlemen Cadets were commissioned from IMA Dehradun in June 2021

- Tomthin Kongkham - 18 Garhwal Rif
- Prem Jyoti - 108 Engr Regt
- Paarth Gupta - 78 Fd Regt
- Ashish Kumar Pandey - 16 Sikh
- Sahil Yadav - 9 Jak Li
- Abhash Jha - ASC (15 Rajput)
- Souradep Datta - 64 Med Regt
- Vaibhav Chauhan - Madras Sappers (Engrs)
- Raushan Kumar - EME (22 Rajput)
- Ravi Kumar - 1852 Fd Regt
- Gulshan Kumar Sharma - 23 Guards
- Naorem Lalit Kumar Singh - ASC (10 Sikh Li)

The Surfeit of Losses

*The summer of 2021 was terrible. The second wave of Covid hit the nation hard and the Rimcollians were no exception. We lost a large number of Rimcollians, particularly among the elderly, and even some young in this wave. All through April and May, the tragic news, messages, remembrances and condolences kept pouring in on every possible platform of social media. We have reproduced some of the messages and remembrances in the newsletter. -- **Editor***

REMEMBERING JD

Col **JAIDEV SINGH**, 116th/ Pratap expired on 14 April 2021 in Bareilly.



My last exchange with Jaidev, or JD, as everyone started calling him from NDA onwards, was at 2.15 pm yesterday (14 April 2021) on WhatsApp. Less than 6 hours later my friend had left this world.

After my relegation in Class II (8th) we became 'Termers' to use the Rimco word for coursemate. He was very good at PT and sports and full of fire and energy. In fact, he was made Section Commander in our VA, whereas I was no appointment at all. He was a good Rimcollian in later years too.

As fate decreed, he and I landed up in the same Squadron in NDA -- INDIA. So, we spent a hectic and intense three years together that transformed us, often rather harshly, from boys to men. We were together day and night, even in an accident in our 6th term Camp TORNA, when our 3-tonne truck toppled over with us INJUNS inside.

We were both DCC in NDA. Come our move to IMA, and Jaidev and I found ourselves in the same Coy (company) -- ALAMEIN! This was too much to be a coincidence, so we spent the year at IMA close together. I think our life together deserve a longer write-up. RIP Jaidev you were one of a kind.

— **Brigadier Steve Ismail**

THE VALIANT WARRIOR

Col **RAMANDEEP SINGH SANDHU**, 123rd/Ranjit passed away on 29th April 2021, after waging a valiant battle



Col Ramandeep Sandhu was featured in the last magazine for release of his book while he was working with Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS).

An obituary from **CLAWS**: Col Sandhu has been with the CLAWS for about two years. True to spirit of a Gunner, a paratrooper, an aviator, and a Rimcollian, he was always bubbling with ideas - not a status quo man. What stood him apart was his very firm conviction - to speak his mind fearlessly. He would speak with conviction, quoting facts, figures, and his rationale. If I may say, he was also the Man Friday, to take on presentations and time bound work at short notice, organise events with the industry, and be an active participant in almost all discussions. Last year, he co-edited the Book, National Security Challenges,

most willingly. Recently, he had got an extension to continue his study leave by another two months. He was visibly happy. But he went away. CLAWS will miss him, his dominating presence, his ideas, for the betterment of the Army.

The Valiant Warrior: "Whenever I realised the end was near, I closed my eyes, recalled my school and asked myself," how can I give up?" I can't help but recall the inspiring speech which Col RS Sandhu had delivered at the reunion a few years ago about his fight with Hep C. It inspired me to write about it in my weekly newspaper column, to inspire many more Hep patients.

Excerpts: 'As the meeting progressed through inarticulate noise, a nattily dressed middle aged man walked to the dais raising quite a few eye brows. His name was Lt Col RS Sandhu. He took the mike and started the address without much ado.

He slowly went onto share something special. He revealed that he was a patient of Hepatitis C and how he has fought the disease. "I am standing

before you today with two kidney transplants, a liver transplant and a brain operation," he said, as he looked fighting fit itching to lead a patrol on the Line of Control or a quick reaction team into a subversive hub to fight for the nation's flag.

"I would not have been here before you today, if I did not belong to this place," he said and without much fanfare went onto say, "Whenever I realised the end was near, I closed my eyes, recalled my school and asked myself," how can I give up?". I was taught by this school to never to give up." For the first time in 20 years, I saw the whole hall stand in ovation, the applause started from the middle rows, went to the rear and caught on to the front rows occupied by the generals, air marshals and admirals. I write this note without talking to Col Sandhu. Sometimes we reporters should not ask questions but soak ourselves in sentiments of a speech not necessarily delivered by a Barack Obama or a Narendra Modi for that matter."

— **Sidharth Mishra**

THE SPIRIT OF MAJ GEN MK SAXENA

Maj Gen MAHENDRA KUMAR SAXENA, AVSM (Retd), left on 28 April 2021



Maj Gen Mahendra Kumar Saxena, AVSM (Retd), was commissioned in 2 Sikh Light Infantry on 08 June 1958, and was a product of St. Columba's, New Delhi and RIMC, Dehradun.

Gen Saxena, Rawlinson Section had to leave RIMC in 1949, as he was considered unfit for military service, due to a badly set triple fracture in the left hand. Nevertheless, the RIMC spirit kept burning bright. Passed matriculation in Delhi and appeared for UPSC JSW exams, without initially telling his family. Qualified and then told his father who was Delhi's Police Chief at the time. Joined JSW 10th course and reunited with his Rimcollian coursemates. Passed out from NDA, 12th NDA Course, CSM Easy Squadron, June 1957.

ADIEU MR MANDAL

Mr KP MANDAL, a former master at RIMC passed on April 27, 2021.



Eminent educationist, writer and poet; Mr KP Mandal, retired Principal of Kendriya Vidyalaya, passed away from Corona on April 27, 2021, at the age of 73, at TIMS Hospital Hyderabad. Mr Mandal spent

his childhood in the midst of the Partition tragedy. He continued his education after completing his childhood in the relief camps, earning two postgraduate degrees-- MSc Maths and MA in Economics.

He spent the first part of his life teaching at RIMC in Dehradun where his former students still remember him fondly. He served as a Principal at various Kendriya Vidyalayas in the later part of his life, including Navy Nagar Mumbai, Karanja, Ahmednagar, and Suryalanka. He

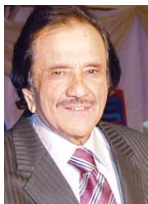
subsequently retired as the principal of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Dehu Road.

Mr Mandal was a gentle yet vivacious man with a distinct personality. He has published about two dozen books and a large number of poetry collections throughout his lifetime, for which he has received many state levels awards. He had such a deep desire to learn new things that he learned to write and read Telugu script for his grand-daughter, Taarika, even at his advanced age. He was living in Hyderabad with his third daughter Ms Geeta and son-in-law Sreeram after his wife passed away in 2016. He is survived by his four daughters.

—Pushpa, Sharmila, Geeta and Meenakshi.

LOSING A PIONEER

KAMAL ZEUL ISLAM (PWRIMC Jan 1947 - Oct 1947) passed away on May 3, 2021



A much-respected name in Bangladesh's corporate and sports world, Islam passed away on May 3, 2021. A long obituary in Bangladesh's leading newspaper The Daily Star said, "A titan, a legend, an iconoclast, a pioneer-these are some of the words that come to one's mind when recalling the memory of Kamal Ziaul Islam, popularly known as KZ Islam, who passed away on May 3, 2021. It is hard to accept that his charming personality and uplifting presence will no longer be a part of our lives."The obit mentioned, KZ Islam's contributions to Bangladeshi cricket are well-known, and he had had many accolades and achievements, such as being the President of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (presently Bangladesh Cricket Board), President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), President of Gulshan Club, and so on. On his RIMC travail, the newspaper wrote, "At the age of 11, he was awarded a scholarship to the Royal Indian Military College in Dehradun, but due to the Partition of India, he went on to complete his schooling at Lawrence College at Murree, Pakistan (1947-52). He completed his education by getting a BSc in chemistry from Calcutta University (1955) and earned B Com (Hons) at the University of Leeds, UK, in 1960. After becoming a Chartered Accountant in 1962, he held a few positions in the UK and returned to Bangladesh in 1964 to make his mark."

— Sidharth Mishra

REMEMBERING VISHAL

Vishal SRIVASTAV, 147th /Shivaji passed away on 14 May 2021



The untimely demise of Vishal Srivastav on 14 May 2021 due to post-Covid medical complications was a shock for all of us. Vishal was a very cheerful and an extremely energetic person. He was a Shivajian always thinking of coming up with novel ideas for the betterment of his section, his brilliance in maths was unparalleled, a favourite of Mr SK Tyagi the then Section Master and our Maths instructor. He was an active sportsman and an avid debater. He belongs to Hardoi, was blessed with a daughter last year and was residing at Noida. God Bless his Soul.

— Arjun Rathore

LOSING A YOUNG AIR WARRIOR

Sqn Ldr ABHINAV CHOUDHARY passed away in an air crash on May 21, 2021



In an extremely tragic loss, a young air warrior and a Rimcollian, Sqn Ldr Abhinav Choudhary (29 years) went down in his aircraft while on a training sortie.

The Rimcollians gathered to bid him final adieu at Suratgarh Air Base where Maj Gen Vikram Varma, VSM, Brig Anuj Kalia, VSM, Gp Capt Nitin Nayal, Col Rahul Agarwal, Col Romal Biswas, Maj Deka, Wg Cdr Vashishtha and Wg Cdr Shivani were present.

The villagers of Langeana in Moga district of Punjab have decided to instal a statute of Sqn Ldr Abhinav Choudhary as he died saving lives of hundred of villagers steering his ill-fated craft away from the residential area and crashing it in the fields.

The Art of Handling Boisterous Minds

Mr SP Bhatia, our Art Master served at the school close to 50 years, some kind of a landmark. He was born on 26 June 1946 and expired on 25 April 2021 due to Covid related complications. Messages, remembrances and condolences poured from all over. There was not a single cadet at RIMC between the years Mr Bhatia served at the school, who was not touched by this genial soul. — **Editor**



Mr Bhatia being honoured by the school in 2019 for his service to RIMC.

MESSAGE FROM MR RAJAT BHATIA: My late father Mr SP Bhatia cherished his long association with RIMC more than anything else in his life; a large part of his discussions often included his lovely experience of his interactions with the Commandants, Admin Staff, Students and everyone else. He was so passionate about the institution that he wished to serve it for a period of 50 years. We as a family feel that the heaps of good wishes that he is receiving through his fellow RIMCOLLIANS will definitely be providing a lot of peace to his departed soul. We are also thankful to each one of you for making his professional journey so memorable and Pray to Almighty that his soul rests in eternal Peace. Om Shanti!

Mr Sunil Kohli (based in USA) writes: I am so saddened to hear of Mr Bhatia's passing away. While in school he fostered a love for the arts in me. Encouraged me to try so many different forms from



Col Jagmohan Singh Brar (extreme left) with Mr SP Bhatia at reunion in 2012

watercolours to oil paintings, to batik to calligraphy even though my talent and skill are very limited. Introduced me to classical art and modern interpretations. I am so happy that when I visited school for reunion a few years ago I was able to share this sentiment with him.

Col Jagmohan Singh Brar: An ardent lover of art who also taught Hindi in School. Though my performance was

abysmal in both the subjects, but that was my own doing. What he taught us informally, was the way he dressed, carried himself and his mannerisms (we used to find it funny). He was sober and gentle in many ways, to brats like us. He was passionate about his work and that could be seen from the many Art Galleries that he presented during Reunions. He rejoined the school after retirement, that showed his commitment to groom many of us. My wife had joined school as part of the English teaching faculty 2008-2009. She remembers him to be a soft spoken, always willing to help, kind of person. He was called 'Pappu' (as he was nicknamed, not sure why, may be the looks of 1970s hero, I guess). But as Rimcos each teacher had a 'special name'. The worst of the lot in art was me. I still remember that drawing of mine titled 'Lady in Waiting'. Rest in Peace Sir. Your contribution to the Rimcollian Fraternity and the 126 Busters will always be remembered. ■

MY FRIEND SUDIPTO

—COL HARJEET SINGH

As India confronts the world's worst COVID-19 outbreak, this story is repeating again and again, with no end in sight. The COVID-19 crisis is literally shaking spirit and soul. It is an unimaginable tragedy that is unfolding with people struggling to cope with the deluge of the dead arriving for cremation at a frightening pace. It is almost as if we are being visited by the biblical plagues and pestilences.

One would have imagined that we would have overcome such deluges with the advancements in science and technology. It is difficult to be stoic in such circumstances. The passing of Sudipto Mukherjee is particularly painful. Losing a course mate who was so full of life and a great fighter and achiever is sad indeed.

IC-23682H Captain Sudipto Mukherjee and I joined RIMC together in August 1961. He was in Ranjit Section while I joined Shivaji. Given the competitive spirit in School we were always antagonists cheering for our respective sections in the various sports and competitions. The only time we were together was when we went for the same SSB at Meerut in September 1965 for joining the NDA. Our SSB result was announced on 23 September 1965, the date of the ceasefire of the Indo-Pak War. I also recall that we went for the same movie two evenings in a row for want of anything better to do. It was "Mere Sanam" starring Biswajeet and Asha Parekh.

Sudipto passed out of RIMC as Section Commander of Ranjit Section and with a Football Blue. He was a great sportsman and achiever in Academics too. In NDA, he passed out as BCC of No. 3 Battalion (Juliet Squadron) He was also the Football Captain and Blue. He also



Mr Sudipto Mukerjee (80th/Ranjit) passed away at AIIMS, New Delhi on 14 May 2021. In this picture he is seen with his wife Suneeta.

won the Military Geography Book prize.

At IMA, Dehradun he passed out in the first 20 in the order of merit. He was the SUO of Alamein Company and also was the Football Captain and earned the Blue. He was commissioned into 16 RAJPUT in December 1969. We were together for the first ever Infantry Young Officers course, in 1970, at the Infantry School, Mhow. He was declared the Best YO of YO-1 course and received the trophy from Sam Manekshaw. He participated in the 1971 War. For personal reasons he decided to quit the Indian Army in 1978 and thereafter came his greatest achievements.

He did his MBA, from Delhi University and won the Gold medal. Thereafter, he conceived and built up a Computer Education business under the name TULEC (a Tata venture), taking it to No. 3 in India within three years. He was the CEO of the first Tata venture in the BPO arena, Sitel (India) Pvt. Ltd. Later he was the CEO, BPO arm of EDS, a Fortune 50 company and Director, Strategic Initiatives for ETelecare, the largest BPO company in the Philippines.

He married Suneeta in 1976. Suneeta is the daughter of Col HS Dhingra, who was the CO of 13 KUMAON in the 1962 War, when Maj Shaitan Singh of the battalion was awarded the PVC (Posthumous). They have two children, Mitali (daughter) and Rajat (son). Happily retired, he settled down in Gurgaon and was actively engaged in social service for the down-trodden and weaker sections of society.

Over the years we had lost touch with each other, but we met again at the Golden Jubilee of our course get-together at NDA. Thereafter, we met again at the Golden Jubilee of our course at IMA Dehradun. He and his wife really livened up the dance floor and their singing together showed that they were a made-for-each-other couple. Sudipto could attend only one Reunion at RIMC, in March 2019. We were there together and I recall how happy he was to visit his alma mater again. For a person who was such an achiever and so full of life, it is difficult to imagine that he spent his last days on a ventilator at AIIMS, Delhi. May his memory remain in our hearts of a vibrant life. Our prayers are with Suneeta and his children. Farewell, course-mate and fellow Rimcollian. ■

A EULOGY COMMODORE THR IYER

—CMDE N ANIL JOSE JOSEPH



I was on my morning walk, when I got a call from Cmde P Suresh indicating that Cmde THR Iyer, CO Venduruthy of the 80's had passed away. My immediate reaction was 'Are you sure?' 'I know him, he was CO Venduruthy when we were Sub Lieuts'. "He is my school type". And many such thoughts flew through. It was a shock for I had planned on connecting with all former COs of Venduruthy. Another Lost opportunity.

The news was confirmed by Cmde BK Mohanti, a fellow Rimcollian of the same time, who was an instructor at Signal School along with Cmde Iyer and who later succeeded Cmde Iyer as CO Agrani. Through him I could then connect with Cmde Iyer's son Sridhar.

Commodore THR Iyer was born on 24 Oct 41 in Trichinopoly, where his father had a flourishing legal practice. His mother was a homemaker and he had an elder brother who worked in the Bank of Baroda. I am told he was attracted to the Services right from his early years and that he found an early opportunity to fulfil his ambition by applying for the Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC), Dehradun, when he saw an advertisement in the newspaper. Vacancies for RIMC besides being on merit, were divided among the States, and in those days, two vacancies were allotted to Tamil Nadu. The selection process then involved an interview with the Governor.

Today it is a panel comprising Chief Secretary, an educationalist (Principal of a School) and an officer of the Armed Forces (Colonel/Brigadier equivalent). The Governor was impressed and soon young THR Iyer embarked a train to Dehra Dun and into the unknown. RIMC (like most public schools) was no cake walk and I guess, like most eleven-

CmdeThinnium Hariharan Rangarajan Iyer, VSM: cadet at RIMC 1953 to 1958 passed away at Thiruvanmalai near Chennai on 5 February 2021



In a hat extreme right and kneeling

year-olds, he too was apprehensive of his continuing in trying conditions. But like all RIMCOS he persevered and he soon found his feet (and a home too).

A contemporary of Cmde Iyer at school recalls, “THR Iyer was one of my seniors in RIMC, but we were in the same class. The first few vacations, for returning to Doon, he would pick me up



At RIMC

from Egmore station. After spending the day at his grandpa’s we would catch the evening GT to Delhi. His father was a lawyer in Trichy. On leave, sometime in the late 60’s, he looked me up in Trichy BHEL where I was an engineer. That was our last interaction”.

At RIMC he was bright in Academics and also became an accomplished Gymnast and a member of the school Gymnastics team. Sports were also a welcome relief and he excelled in field games. Sports and the wide spread of activities at RIMC still is a huge attraction and a welcome relief. Years later in the Navy he made his mark as a goalkeeper in Hockey and Football earning the nickname of ‘Thanga’, after Peter Thangaraj, of the Madras Regiment who was an acclaimed goalkeeper for the Services and National Football teams. ‘Thanga’ also rhymed with ‘Ranga’. On graduating from RIMC, THR Iyer joined the 19th course, King Squadron of the National Defence Academy on 01 Jan

1958.

He did his cadet’s and Midshipman’s time on INS Kistna and INS Mysore/ Kuthar and was commissioned on 01 July 1962. On completion of initial training as a Sub Lieutenant and obtaining his watch keeping certificate, on board Betwa/ Ganga he became Navigating Officer of Kistna. As a Lieutenant he was given his first command, of the patrol boat, INS Sarayu. He then did his Long ‘C’ course in Signal School, Cochin in 1968-69 and on completion was appointed as SCO of INS Trishul on 19 Dec 1969. Having made a mark in the Communications specialisation, he was selected to undergo the first Electronic Warfare course in the USSR.

Fresh from his training in Electronic Warfare, he joined a highly classified group tasked to monitor and intercept Pakistani radio and communications during the 1971 war and played a key role in ensuring the retaliatory strikes on our missile boats were unsuccessful



Commodore Iyer during service

during the missile boat attack on Karachi harbour. As a Lt Cdr he was appointed as the commissioning SCO of the INS Nilgiri in 1972 after going to HMS Mercury in the UK for training on the Integrated Communication System (ICS), which was new to the Indian Navy. As the XO, Cmde Ranjit Rai reminisces “Iyer was a down to earth, fine professional communications officer and Capt DS Paintal trusted him fully. Except for Capt Paintal we went to UK for pre- commissioning training and Iyer went to HMS Mercury. We met for debrief — it was a dream commission as all were hot professionals-no licking just seeing to our men and ship”.

In the words of R Adm Alan O’Leary, “Commodore THR Iyer left a lasting impression on me, when I joined my first ship in Aug 1973, as the Captain’s Secretary of INS Nilgiri, the first major Warship to be built keel- up in India in MDL. I was indeed fortunate to get acquainted with so many high-flying

officers, including the SCO, Lt Cdr THR Iyer, serving on the Nilgiri back then. Every officer of the commissioning crew had been picked for their reputation as outstanding professionals and Lt Cdr THR Iyer was no exception. The team was led by the gentlemanly, CO, Captain Daljit Paintal, ably assisted by the XO, Lt Cdr Ranjit Rai, with other officers; Cdr SBN Singh- Cdr (L), Cdr Dasgupta - Cdr (E), Lt Cdr Chatterji- Supply Officer, Lt Cdr Rajnish- NO, Lt Cdr ‘Gullu’ Kumar - TASO, Lt Cdr Madhvendra Singh- Gunnery Officer, Lt Cdr Bahadur- Flight Cdr. As the Communications officer, Lt Cdr Iyer was responsible for operating the new Integrated Communication System (ICS), then a first in the Navy”.

“The sad part about the ship INS Nilgiri was that it was over crowded. The Junior Officer’s Mess (JOM) had bunks for less than half the number of junior officers assigned to the ship and I was one of those unfortunate Sub Lts who did

not have a bunk. So, one had perforce, to sleep on the couches in the Wardroom, even as the more senior officers happily indulged themselves at the bar. I distinctly remember Lt Cdr Iyer making us comfortable bedding down for the night, while they were downing a post prandial drink or two. He was that considerate about the welfare of the junior officers. So many moons have passed and now I have to recall with regret, that many of these fine individuals are no longer in our midst”.

Former CNS, Adm Madhvendra Singh, who was the commissioning GO says, “Those who commissioned the NILGIRI were all sent to Training Schools in Cochin to impart Training on ‘state of the art’ equipment then being inducted into the Navy on board INS Nilgiri. So, he went to Signal School and I to the Gunnery School - He was a very pious and religious person. A through professional and a much-loved shipmate

who seldom raised his voice and was ever considerate and helpful and always smartly turned out. A strict disciplinarian who led by example and never hesitated to call a spade a spade”.

As a Lt Cdr, he served as Chief Instructor of the Signal School between 1974-75 where he helped set up the ICS equipment in the Technical Wing of Signal School for training. This was followed by Staff Course at DSSC Wellington in 1975, Training Commander onboard Delhi and then as the Officer in Charge Signal School in Cochin from 1977-79. Cdr Carl Gomes, who served under him as Chief Instructor, Signal School in 1979 when he was the Oi/C adds; “Cmde THR Iyer was a through gentleman and a down-to-earth professional. A rough diamond: his gruff exterior hid a heart of gold, true to his nickname, Thanga”. (Thangam’ in Tamil means gold).

This was followed by Command of INS Jarawa in the Andaman from Dec 79 to Jul 80 and Chief Staff Officer at Fortress Headquarters thereafter till Jul 81. He then Commanded INS Sharabh an LST from July 81 to July 82. This was followed by a stint as Deputy Director of Signal Intelligence, in New Delhi. Thereafter he commanded INS Agrani (Coimbatore) as a Capt/Cmde and INS Venduruthy (Cochin) dual hatting as NOIC Cochin.

Cmde THR Iyer was CO Venduruthy when we were Sub Lieuts and most have good memories of the strict, forthright and understanding man that he was. His tenures in Command only enhanced his reputation and stories galore about the man still do the rounds. He spoke freely and frankly and the ability to speak without beating about the bush is vivid. I recall an incident wherein the wife of a senior officer was telling an officer what to do, how to do etc., when Cmde Iyer as CO Venduruthy intervened to say ‘Look Ma’m, they don’t have to take orders from you’. The husband, senior to Cmde Iyer could merely look on for Cmde Iyer was right on this etiquette. For each of us have a place and we must be careful not to transgress that line. Cdr Anil Jagtiani messaged me on



From family album

knowing that Cmde Iyer had passed away. “Adm Chawla sir and self were called in No. 2s by Cmde Iyer because we complained about the poor quality of fork in SNC and bent them. Good Man. RIP Sir”. For someone to acknowledge someone as a good man even after getting punished speaks well of both.

Cmde Iyer joined the Coast Guard towards the fag end of his career and was appointed as the COMCG (East) in Chennai. From there he took premature retirement in Mar 1990 and did a 10-year stint in the Merchant Navy. He first sailed in OSVs and later on joined TCI (seaways) which ran a regular freighter service between the mainland (Chennai) and the Andaman Islands.

Post retirement he finally dropped anchor in Besant Nagar in Chennai where he and his lifelong companion Sasi spent happy times interspersed

with several visits to the United States where his two children, Hema and Sridhar resided. After a few years of indifferent health, the couple shifted base to Tiruvannamalai to live with their son Sridhar just a few days before he passed away. Sridhar, a former investment banker in USA and Singapore now lives with his wife in Tiruvannamalai, pursuing a quiet spiritual life. Hema, a doctor who specialized in psychiatry, lives in the US with her family. Her husband Partha is a mining Engineer and they have two daughters Janani studying medicine and Anjali who is in High School.

Away from the Navy, Cmde Iyer revealed a gentler, softer side, besides being a loving husband and father, he absolutely doted on his granddaughters, Janani and Anjali. They have fond memories of him cutting guavas and making (and eating) peanut butter

sandwiches for them and in general spoiling them thoroughly during their regular visits to India. He lived a life of quiet simplicity, always ready to lend a hand with household chores, however mundane. He once spends 6 months in the US, with his daughter's family during a time of crisis and essentially ran the household single-handedly, from cooking to cleaning.

In his mid-sixties, he spent two years tutoring his grandnephew, a special-needs child, on whom parents and teachers had all but given up. With a rare combination of patience, compassion and relentless discipline, he ensured that the boy passed his 12th standard exams from a mainstream school. He was also generous to a fault and gave willingly, often unasked, to those in need without any expectation whatsoever. He was also a huge source of support to his extended family, and the 'go to' person for any problem. He also had a deep spiritual side that few people were aware of which helped him weather the ups and downs of life.

Seniors, peers and subordinates have only had the highest respect for him and have acknowledged the humane and understanding side even while talking of his being a disciplinarian and someone who was forthright. A man needs to have a good heart to do that. Among the many stories, I will recount two from my course mates.

On a lighter vein, Deepak Adhar recalls, "He was CO Venduruthy when we were doing sub courses. I got marched up to him because I complained in the SLUT (my acronym for Sub Lts Under Trainees) Mess register that a particular Cdr ate my chicken." Incidentally we then had a Sub Lt Under trainees Mess which we called SLUM and we Sub Lieutenants ran it and food there was better than the new Command Mess. On the Commodore's table Deepak Adhar justified himself "As OOD on a ship will it be appropriate that sailor doesn't get chicken because OOD ate it for food tasting." He made Deepak sit down and censured the Commander for

unbecoming conduct.

Capt VK Janardanan (Johny) shared this. In 1987/88 as a Sub Lt post returning from AFA he had taken permission to get married while undergoing his delayed Sub Courses at SMWT. His saga of getting grounded at AFA also has an 'ill found ring' to it that led to his submitting papers for release from service - important to understand his state. Johny had submitted his marriage application 'through proper channel' and since he was going on leave was informed by his Course Officer that he could get married and by the time he returned from leave the

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 he gave a dressing
 to the concerned
 officers at SMWT"

permission would have been granted. He returned after one month leave with his wife and her unwell father. He insisted on sticking to the truth of being married, when his course officer and other officers in the hierarchy at SMWT kept advising him to keep silent and to only declare the marriage post watchkeeping (completion of the initial training period). His application to stay ashore, was also turned down despite the ill health of his father-in-law and the pressure on his newly married wife in a new place.

Johny politely told his seniors that the order not to stay ashore would be difficult to obey under the circumstances he was in. That day, he

was marched up post classes for disobedience of orders, put on 'gating' and asked to report to OODs at Venduruthy from 0600 to 0800, attend classes and again post 1700 till 2200, even on Sundays and holidays. This went on for nearly a year with other punishments being added for Johny would rush to take his Father-in-law to a civil hospital whenever he was informed that his wife had come to Venduruthy gate. Johny was eventually charge sheeted and marched up to CO Venduruthy with recommendations for higher punishments - dismissal from the Navy for not having followed the regulations in the Indian Navy.

In Johny's words "Cmde THR Iyer, the Commanding Officer Venduruthy was the first officer who allowed him to express his side of the story. Cmde Iyer was just shocked at the lack of empathy, he gave a dressing to the concerned officers at SMWT". Cmde Iyer asked of Johny if he was telling the truth about his father-in-law's illness, mother in laws death and wife's state. Cmde Iyer not only apologized to the young officer (Johny) for all that was done, he permitted him to stay ashore and draw rations in kind. He of course forwarded the case to the CINC, for the regularization invoked was not in CO Venduruthy's powers to grant, but he recommended that Johny should be dealt fairly.

In his words "Its men such as Cmde THR Iyer who are the true leaders of men who not only command great amount of respect from men in uniform but who live on in our memories for ever, I was made his staff officer post my march up and when I told him I was uncomfortable in the job he put me under a very interesting officer called Lt Thomas who was the provost officer of Venduruthy who kindled my desire to be a provost officer, a desire that was scuttled by another officer". "Amongst those I consider my hero's in the Indian Navy, Cmde THR Iyer would rank among the top most. Love and respect."

"RIP Cmde Iyer - You will live in us, in the lives of people you touched". ■

(The author is from 112th/Ranjit)

THE LAST POST

Name	Section & Year in RIMC	Date of Demise
Lt Col Satish Kumar Sharma	Ranjit, 1955 - 59	02 March 2021
Brig N Deka	Shivaji, 1956-60	04 March 2021
Col Malvender Singh	Kitchener, 1935 - 41	22 March 2021
Wg Cdr RS Dhool	Shivaji, 1957 - 62	05 April 2021
Col Jaidev Singh	Pratap	14 April 2021
Mr Sanjay Gokhale	Shivaji	April 2021
Mrs Rita Sen w/o Col Hirak Shubra Sen	—	22 April 2021
Lt Gen RN Batra	Pratap, 1950-53	25 April 2021
Mr SP Bhatia	Arts Master, RIMC	25 April 2021
Mr KP Mandal	Section Master, Chandrgupta	27 April 2021
Mrs Kusum Singh, w/o Lt Gen SK Singh	—	28 April 2021
Col Ramandeep Singh Sandhu	Ranjit, 1984-89	29 April 2021
Maj Gen Mahendra Kumar Saxena	Rawlinson	28 April 2021
Lt Col Surendra Prasad Singh (Tanika)	Pratap, 1956-60	30 April 2021
Mr Kamal Zeul Islam	Jan - Oct 1947	03 May 2021
Brig Raj Kapur	Ranjit, 1972-76	04 May 2021
Maj Suresh Pratap Sinha	Pratap, 1951-56	06 May 2021
Capt Sudipto Mukerjee	Ranjit, 1961-65	14 May 2021
Maj Gen Vijay Pal Yadav	Roberts, 1946-49	14 May 2021
Mr Vishal Srivastava	Shivaji, 1995-99	14 May 2021
Mr Salam Sarat Singh	Pratap, 1964-69	17 May 2021
Sqn Ldr Abhinav Choudhary		20 May 2021
Col YPS Baduria	Pratap, 1973-78	30 May 2021
Mr Siddharth Sharan,	Chandragupta, 1992-96	30 May 2021
Mrs Chitra Nagesh, w/o late Maj PS Nagesh	—	03 June 2021
Dr Aditya Vikram Shaunik, s/o Gen VN Sharma	—	04 June 2021
Cdr V Srimali	Ranjit	04 June 2021
Mr LN Thakur	Section Master, Ranjit	16 June 2021

PROMOTIONS & NOMINATIONS

PROMOTIONS

Colonel to Brigadier

- Col Mandeep Grewal
 - Col Rahul Gupta
 - Col KJ Singh
 - Col Kapil Rana
 - Col DS Kadyan

Brigadier to Maj Gen

- Brig Mohit Wadhwa,
 - Brig MK Zaki
- Brig Vishal Aggarwal
- Brig Mohit Gandhi
- Brig Viney Handa

Maj Gen to Lt Gen

- Lt Gen Adosh Kumar

HCC/HDMC Nominations

- Col Ved Vyas Samal, Assam
- Col Napoleon Nayak, AAD
- Col Ashish Kojiam, Armd
- Col Soumik Choudhary, Garh Rif
 - Col Nitin Rakheja, EME
 - Col Digvijay Singh, Raj Rif

Foreign Higher Command Equivalent Courses

- Col Ashish Kojiam, Armd, DSSC, at US Eisenhower School
 - Col DS Parihar, 2 Raj Rif, in Russia.
 - Col N Nayak, AAD, in Republic of Korea

DSSC Nominations from Navy

- Cdr Kaushik Kanungo
- Cdr Amrit Kumar
- Cdr G Anvesh Murty
- Cdr Ruchir Khajuria
- Lt Cdr Karan Tyagi
- Cdr Vaibhav Gupta
- Lt Cdr Vishal Sharma
- Lt Cdr RP Singh
- Lt Cdr Pranay Chandra

Appointments and Selections

- Rimcollians continue to shine in CDM: Capt Amit Sood(IN) awarded Best in HDMC and MMS while Col PPS Mann is also amongst the prize winners.
- Rear Adm Kapil Mohan Dhir was appointed as Joint Secretary in the Department of Military Affairs, MoD in May 2021,
- From RIMC, the young RIMCO's have once again shown their mettle in the NDA merit list with 18 of them joining this term in NDA. This includes 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 positions in UPSC Merit List - a total of five in first 10.



Capt (IN) Amit Sood is all smiles after sweeping the trophies at CDM, Secunderabad.

A Rimcollian Legacy & its Discoverer

MAJ GEN K ZORAWAR SINGH'S TANK AT RAJAURI



In course of the research for the Centenary Volume, we came across a document which said that **“The Stuart light tank used by Zorawar Singh is now an exhibit at the War Museum in Rajauri. It bears both his name and his motto: Fortune Favours The Brave.”** The deputy commander at Rajauri Brigadier Dipankar Saha was immediately contacted for picture of the tank and to our dismay it was learnt that the document had catalogued a wrong tank and Gen Zoru’s tank could not be found. Brigadier Saha, took it on himself to trace and reclaim our lost legacy. Within five days, Brigadier Saha sent a message, “Sir I found the tank...pl send me ur email id.” While the photo of the tank would be used in the volume, I requested Dipankar for a click with the tank, a Rimcollian legacy and its discoverer — **Sidharth Mishra**

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