

Vol XIII Issue-I (Bi-Annual) | March 2019

The Rimcollian

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

World Warriors



ASIAD MEDALIST
MAJ ASHISH MALIK

RIMCOLLIANS AWARDED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AND GALLANTRY MEDALS ON THE OCCASION OF 70TH REPUBLIC DAY

PVSM

Air Mshl B Suresh, AVSM, VM (1972-76 Ranjit)

Maj Gen DA Chaturvedi, AVSM, SM (1973-78 Ranjit)

AVSM

Lt Gen ST Upasani, SM, VSM (1972-77 Ch'gupt)

Rear Adm Kapil Mohan Dhir, VSM (1976-80 Pratap)

SM (Distinguished)

Maj Gen PN Ananthanarayanan (1975-79 Ch'gupt)

Brig Adosh Adosh Kumar (1977-82 Pratap)

VSM

AVM KS Reddy (1975-79 Shivaji)

Maj Gen H Dharmarajan, SM** (1978-82 Ch'gupt)

Brig Sandeep Singh (1980-85 Shivaji)

Brig Suyash Sharma (1978-83 Ch'gupt)

Gp Capt Rajive Sharma (1974-78 Shivaji)

Col Ashish Ranjan (1984-90 Ranjit)

Col Amresh Gunjan (1984-90 Ch'gupt)

Wg Cdr SA Jakhalu (1991-96 Shivaji)

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Printed at

Om Printers

Photo credit

The cover photo & several
other pictures in this issue
are courtesy PIB, IAF, RIMC,
www.bharatrakshak.com



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Time for veterans to wield a pen



Air Marshal Prasad P Reddy

Dear Rimcollians,

I am extremely happy and proud to say that my Editorial team has done an excellent job in bringing out the September 2018 issue of *The Rimcollian*, 2019 Calendar as well as this Issue on time and hopefully to the expected standard. Of course, this was possible only because of the well written contributions by many of you, and the hard work put in by the members of the Editorial team. I hope Charlie Sir (my predecessor Brigadier CS Thapa) approves and blesses our efforts from his heavenly abode.

The newly introduced Achievers' Gallery has been appreciated widely as it provides role models and inspiration to young Rimcollians apart from instilling pride in Alma Mater. However, Rimcollians especially from the civilian walks of life have not been forthcoming with their life stories, which, as I said earlier, could be a great inspiration to young Rimcollians. I am fully aware that Rimcollians are taught not to volunteer but if we have the basic facts, we can do the literary stuff to forge an interesting article.

Similarly, we have not received any emails on robamagazine@gmail.com with comments and suggestions to help us improve the content and get up. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to give your comments as it will encourage the Editorial team. Even brickbats are preferred over deathly silence and indifference.

I am extremely grateful to our former Maths teacher Mr LN Thakur for having made a handsome contribution to the ROBA magazine fund. He turns 88 this year but keeps himself abreast with developments about the school and its alumni, which I am sure must be acting as elixir to keep up his exuberance. Mr Thakur should be able to motivate the non-subscribers of *The Rimcollian*, to shell out the few shillings to keep the publication going.

I wish to particularly thank Col VY Gidh for very timely article on Italian battle fields, considering that the 2019 calendar is themed on WW II, with most of the decorations being won in Italy and Wg Cdr Unni Kartha for the article on killing fields of Sri Lanka, apart from the others he has penned for this issue. I request veterans to pen down their experiences in the battle field, which would not only be a motivational factor but a valuable historical record.

Ich Dien

24 February 2019

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P Reddy', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Air Marshal Prasad P Reddy (retd)

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT



President ROBA

एयर चीफ मार्शल बी एस धनोआ
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1. New year greetings to Rimcollians and their families. The year 2019 may bring good fortune to the Rimcollian fraternity and its alma mater. The past year is gone with many good memories to cherish and some bad memories to surpass.
2. As we are fast approaching our Centenary in three years from now, I once again request all Rimcollians to be part of the Centenary Celebrations Committee (CCC) in its planning, conduct, generation of funds etc. Response from the fraternity so far is not encouraging for conduct of the Mega Event. I once again request you all to volunteer to formulate sub-committees of CCC to set the ball roll-in and come up with timely invaluable suggestions.
3. Let's mark the Centenary Celebrations towards the betterment of RIMC in various aspects. Your generous contribution to ROBA Trust would augment funding towards hiring of Master, Coaches, Staff to make up deficiency of strength. It would be nice if all contribute to ROBA Trust to reinforce our cause - RIMC. I have been urging the fraternity to consider making Auto Transfer, a minimum of Rs 500/- a month, to boost the Corpus which would not abate our endeavours in bettering the infrastructure and other facilities at our alma mater.
4. I wish all Rimcollians and their families the very best and a Happy Reunion 2019.

GOD BLESS RIMCOLLIANS ICH DIEN.

30 Jan 19

Air Chief Marshal
Chief of the Air Staff

MESSAGE OF SECY ROBA

**Group Captain Deepak Ahluwalia
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My dear Rimcollians,

FROM SECRETARY'S DESK

With the onset of New Year reverse count for centenary celebrations has begun. Three years to go for celebrations and we have a massive task at hand to make centenary celebrations successful which meets the standards set by our predecessors. Like in the past we need to create milestone to host this event. The biggest task is to raise finances to meet the requirements of the big budget function. We have started the process of collecting subscriptions for the same. The early donors have enjoyed the early bird discount. Those who have not contributed till date have the chance of availing the benefits before 31st Mar 2019, before rates are revised. In our previous communications explained in detail how your subscription is going to contribute towards the celebrations.

Your donation towards the ROBA funds, which entitles you for a 50% tax rebate under Sec 80g of the IT Act, are as follows:-

Membership Fee	-	Rs 3,000/-.
Magazine Fund	-	Rs 2,000/-.
ROBA Trust	-	Rs 5,000/-.

Our retired teacher, Shri LN Thakur has added to his earlier contribution by making a handsome contribution to the magazine fund and Lt Gen Balwant Negi donated a handsome amount for the centenary celebrations.

I must complete the editorial committee led by air marshal PP Reddy for smooth taking over the production of the newsletter after the sad demise of Brig CS Thapa.

I also urge all brethren to volunteer and take part in formulation of various Sub Committees for the Centenary Celebrations.

Looking forward to a very warm Reunion in March 2019.

With warm regards.

Yours sincerely,

ICH-DIEN

MARCH ♦ 2019

COAS VISIT TO RIMC

— Colonel **VIVEK SHARMA**



Reviewing the Guard of Honour

It was a historic day for RIMC to have the COAS grace the occasion as the Chief Guest for the graduation ceremony. Prior to him, the last COAS, who was not a Rimcollian, to visit RIMC was Gen KV Krishna Rao during the Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1982.

Gen Bipin Rawat, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC, the COAS had been informally approached earlier by the Commandant and ROBA Secretary in the month of May 2018 during the Sanawar Dialogue Seminar to visit the college. He sounded upbeat and positive about the

proposal. This was followed up officially through the staff channels. However, it was the intimate indulgence of our ROBA President who insisted with COAS to visit his Alma Mater. The COAS thus acceded to the request as per the programme forwarded by RIMC.



COAS in the Cadets Mess

The visit almost did not take place. Due to certain exigency, the COAS was nominated as the reviewing officer for NDA Passing Out Parade on 30 November 2018. However, he kept his commitment to be with RIMC on 29

November 2018. During the visit to the RIMC, he was highly impressed by the presentation of smart guard of honour by the cadets, paid his respect at the war memorial and interacted with young cadets at the hobby display. As

the chief guest, he presented the awards the graduating course and thereafter dined in the Cadets Mess. He also interacted with the serving and veteran Rimcollians of Dehradun.



COAS with the Dehradun Rimcollians

The COAS was accompanied by Mrs Mridula Rawat. In addition, the two personal staff officers, Col Nagendra Rawat, Deputy MA and Capt Bhojpal Saikia, ADC are both Rimcollians.

The school looks forward to more such visits by the senior officers of the defence services to motivate the cadets and see the 'Cradle of Excellence' for themselves.

A MEDAL AT ASIAD

— Major **ASHISH MALIK**



Major Ashish Malik, second from the right, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi

I started riding as a hobby in my class 1A in 2001 and soon it became a passion and a part of my life, finally leading to a silver medal in Asian Games. When I started riding, we had 18 horses in the college, mainly for riding, and we used to go to IMA for learning showjumping, as different horses are required for riding, show jumping and polo.

My first medal was won with in two years of starting to ride, in 2003 at the first IPSC championship, held in PPS Nabha. I won a silver medal in showjumping which was a great motivation to excel. In 2005, I won my first medal in junior nationals in year 2005 as a RIMC cadet. I continued riding in NDA as part of the academy team and was fortunate enough to be a part of the





Indian team in CSIY games in 2007 where the Indian team won a bronze medal. From NDA, I passed out as the best rider and a blazer in equestrian, and moved on to IMA. The riding continued in Dehradun, from where it had started, and I did my first three day event as a gentleman cadet in IMA.

From IMA, I was commissioned in to the ASC and I did my infantry attachment with 6/8 GR in Manipur. I used to compete in equestrian events while on leave during the three years of my infantry attachment, which was mainly in the field area. When I came back to ASC, I was allotted with two sporting horses and I was fortunate to be a part of the corps team. This enabled me to compete in various competitions to sharpen my skills. I was selected to be sponsored by Embassy Group, Bangalore through the Equestrian Federation of India for training abroad for the Asian games. We moved to Europe, and trained in



France for eight months for the Asian games. The 18th Asian Games were held from 18 August to 2 September 2018 in the Indonesian cities of Jakarta and Palembang. I rode a Swiss breed horse named Frimeur du record in the 2018 Asian games where our team won a silver medal in the three day event. I

have won a total of 203 medals in various national, international and army championships. The RIMC has been instrumental in my success because the first time I sat on a horse was when I was in college, and I won the first national medal during my stay at the college. ■

WELLINGTON RIMCOLLIANS MEET: AUGUST 2018

— Major **RPS RANA**

The 74th Staff Course at Wellington commenced on 5th June 2018 and since then it has been all about studies on the weekdays and various regiment, course and squadron socials on the weekends. However, the most awaited social for the Rimcollians in Wellington finally happened on 04 August at a quaint resort in Coonoor. A total of 15 instructors and student officers of DSSC along with their families were in attendance. It was a welcome relief for the student officers to meet their instructors in a familiar environment beyond the constraints of the Staff College. The instructors on their

part could be seen imparting valuable advice on how to excel in the course. For many it was the first get together since NDA which made it even more special.

The beautiful weather and the warm ambience made everyone nostalgic about their time in college. After a round of drinks, the school spirit and comradery was as high as ever which was evident from the loud laughter. As the drinks flowed, the laughter only got louder as everyone shared anecdotes from their time in college. The tri service environment added even more flavour to an already vibrant evening. One could make out section types

huddling together with Pratap section securing the strategic location next to the bar. Capt Aseem Mittal (IN), being the senior most present delivered a short speech motivating the youngsters to do well and urging them to keep the school spirit alive and growing. Towards the end, amidst loud cheers for RIMC, as expected the Shivajians tried to make mischief by starting their own cheer. However, their voices were quickly drowned as all other sections erupted with cheers of their own. It was an evening to remember, the first of many that we hope to have during our stay in Wellington. ■



Col Rajneesh Mohan (S 86-92), Capt Amit Sood (IN) (S 91-95), Col AK Tiwari (S 87-93), Capt Aseem Mittal (IN) (C 84-89), Col Rakesh Nair (C 80-85), Col Abhijeet Tembe (R 91-95)

Sqn Ldr AD Roy (R 97-01), Sqn Ldr Ankush Sudyal (S 98-03), Lt Col Ravikant (R 94-99)

Lt Col PV Mohan (P 96-2001), Maj RPS Rana (P 99-2004), Maj Ajit Singh Negi (C 00-04), Maj Sundeep Karwasra (P 99-2004), Maj Sai Anvesh (C 00-04), Maj Aditya Sharma (S 99-2004)

OLD BOYS IN WELLINGTON: SEPTEMBER 2018

— Col **RAKESH NAIR**, 127 Course, Chandragupta

It was a memorable evening as the Rimcollians of DSSC Wellington hosted two of the old boys, Air Marshal PP Reddy (Retd), PVSM, VM and Mr Chiranjit Banerjee along with their better halves at the Wellington Gymkhana Club on 12 September 2018. It was a lively start to the weekend, with pleasant weather and the

reminiscing of old days in school, which made the evening even more delightful. It was a rare opportunity for the younger officers to learn from the wisdom and experience of the veterans. Especially as Air Mshl Reddy, former CISC had done a lot for DSSC through HQ IDS. Mr Chiranjit Bannerjee, a hard core Rimcollian and a living

encyclopaedia on matters RIMC related many interesting anecdotes and stories. After a sumptuous dinner the evening came to an end with the two visiting Old Boys distributing copies of the 'The Rimcollian' to everyone present and urging one and all to keep up the school spirit and also subscribe to the magazine. May our tribe increase! ■



Standing L to R: Maj Pallav Jha, Maj Aditya Sharma, Maj Sai Anvesh, Lt Col PV Mohan, Capt Ankit Sood(IN), Col Abhijeet Tembe, Col Rakesh Nair, Chiranjit Banerjee, Air Marshal PP Reddy (Retd), Col AK Tiwari, Lt Col Ravikant, Maj RPS Rana, Maj Sundeep Karwasra, Maj Ajit Singh Negi

RIMCOLLIANS : THE MHOW CHAPTER

— Col **RATNESH JHA**

The Family Beyond Blood got together in Mhow on 19 November 2018, bringing back reminiscences of the times spent at the Alma Mater. The get together or the 'Reunion' as we call it is a meeting of souls, seniors meeting juniors, course mates meeting each other in ecstasy and reliving their golden days at the school. The venue was DSOI, Mhow and forty Rimcollians were in attendance.

The social began with the introductions which served as the ice breakers. As 'nice' as the Rimcollians try to

be, they cannot resist little bit of inter section leg pulling and one-upmanship soon, which predictably soon started. As the late comers poured in from their respective classes, the venue was filled with anecdotes echoing from all the corners of the room about mischievous pursuits during school days. The most famous line amongst the Rimcollians, "During our times" found its way amongst the conversations as expected. Some of the Young Officers had the privilege of meeting their "First time, 5A" and were

reminded of the wonderful times they had in their respective sections.

The Rimcollians also celebrated the success of two Young Officers namely Lt Avinash Chetty (173rd Course, Shivaji) of 1/9 GR and Capt Vivek Joshi (170th Course, Ranjit) of 18 Grenadiers. Lt Avinash Chetty was awarded with Best in Platoon Weapons, Best in Support Weapons, Best in Public Speaking, 2nd Best in Tactics and overall Best Young Officer and Capt Vivek Joshi was awarded with 2nd Best in Platoon Weapons and



The Mhow Rimcollians

overall 3rd Best Young Officer in the Infantry Young Officer course serial no 145 in Mhow.

The young brigade of officers charged in at the dinner table after what it seemed to be like an never ending session of drinks. The DSOI catering team toiled hard to ensure that the food was prepared to suit the taste buds of

the Rimcollians and the delectable Scotch Eggs proved to be a stiff competition to their counterparts at our school but as always nothing can beat the ones prepared in the kitchen of the Cadets Mess. The sumptuous dinner did manage to tantalize everyone's taste buds. Soon the moment came for everyone to bid farewell and it was time

for hugs and goodbyes as most of the student officers had a curfew on them.

For all of us who were part of the get together it was an evening to remember. Like all good things, the Reunion too came to its end but not before the customary photograph session and "Three Loud Cheers for RIMC" echoed in Mhow. ■

NIGHT OF THE GENERALS

— Wg Cr **UNNI KARTHA**



L-R : Cdr BD Raju (R/57), Maj Gen RK Batra (R/53), Maj PT Choudhary (R/58), Maj Gen SK Gupta (R/55), Maj Gen AR Kumar (R/55), Maj Gen R Gossain (R/59), Wg Cdr UG Kartha (R/62), Col C Arvind (S/65), Col R Chopra (S/73), Maj Gen R Singh (R/58), Lt Col P Rangaroo (R/59) and Col PVK Choudhary (R/60).

Maj Gen SK Gupta Rtd (R/55) paid a visit to Hyderabad, like Mahabali during Onam, to check out the wellbeing of MCME and the Corps of Engrs. Though he didn't indicate the specific purpose of his visit, I suspect that he was sent on a secret mission to inspect the roads that have been opened to public and to suggest construction of an Autobahn right through the S'bad Cantonment, highly appreciated by the 'rum'colians of Hyd/S'bad. Since traffic has become incorrigible, after Sitaraman lead the road opening party, the Autobahn is an excellent Idea Sir-Jee. The alignment of the Autobahn needs to go past elbow bending army training area of RSI; you got it, the one next to OP Hill, double DCB and exercise area with golf balls, all of it home ground of the rumcolians. Therefore, on 6th Jul 18, the rumcolians of Hyd/Sec,

requested Maj Gen Gupta to also inspect whether whisky tastes better in our DCB. It was a tactical exercise without ladies (TEWL), who found it more sensible to play tambola, instead of hearing the repeated battle cry, 'jitega bhai jitega, Ranjit Jitega' !!! It turned out to be the 'Night of the Generals', minus Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif, equally thrilling since the ones from Ranjit are now zestfully mischievous 'whiskcolians', except me, the only true Rumcolian in the group !!.

Gupta Sir was piped in with Teacher doing 100 Pipers, serenaded in RSI Ops room with sand model and tactical 1" map (as you can see on the wall) under the leadership of Gens ARK and R Singh Sirs. The rest gave a guard of honour, while saying 'cheers' in between munching Hyd speciality, 'ulta pulta'

Chicken 69. With reverence to 62 war, Chow En Lai special dinner followed. My personal opinion of the night is that too many Generals, brings the roof down with mischievous jokes of their days in Ranjit. Ranga Sir's daughter, in her effort to make him disciplined, shaved off his head while he was sleeping, and couriered his painstakingly irrigated and cultivated hair to Tirupathy. Now Ranga Sir is hiding his head under a Nike cap, waiting for salvation from lord Venkateswara, and next pay commission!!

Cheers to all. Come visit us, for a battle of the DCB !!

PS: We have 52 fused batteries (Ever & Never Reddy) in Hyd. Usually 75% are in US, short-circuiting Trump, in a war of the 'Bridge', like Monty & Ponty in Arnhem !! ■

HYDERABAD RIMCOLLIANS MEET

— Col **SHAILENDER ARYA**

The Rimcollians in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad meet many times in a year, mostly at the RSI. Hyderabad has a large number of retired Rimcollians, some of them very actively working post-retirement, some in niche fields in the corporate sectors and a floating population of the serving officers in Secunderabad Cantonment. In addition, there are always a few Air Force Rimcollians in the Air Force Stations at Begumpet, Hakimpet and Bidar – none too far for a spirited air warrior.

In the second half of 2018, three Rimcollian meets were organised in Secunderabad. The first meet was conducted on 14 July 2018 in form of a dinner. It was a relatively small meet at the ASC Mess wherein the newly arrived officers for attending Higher Defence Management Course at the College of Defence Management along with some of the instructors and the civilian Rimcollians met up. The attendees in this meet were Col Arindam Saha, Col Ashish Vasudeva, Capt (IN) S Supradeepan, Col



The Rimcollian Ladies at the AOC Mess on 25 November 2018

Ravi Kumar, Col Pallav Mishra, Col R Shankar, Col V Jacob Kurian, Col Shailender Arya, Cdr Rishi Raj Singh (ret'd), Mr Arumilli Anand and Mr K Kaladhar

The second meet was a large one, attended by over 20 Rimcollians. It was organised by Brig JJS Bhinder, the new Commandant of the AOC Centre in the AOC Centre Officers Mess on 25 November 2018. It was a lavish affair, complemented by the lovely surroundings of the Mess and a large

attendance of the Rimcollians accompanied by their better halves.

The occasion for the third get-together was prompted by the arrival of few Rimcollians for the EME Reunion in Secunderabad. A quick get-together was organised at the AOC Centre Officers Mess on 09 December 2018. Brig and Mrs RK Manchanda and Col and Mrs RK Bhagat were the guest of honour for this meet. The Rimcollians of the twin cities now plan to organise a larger get-together in the March 2019. ■

A VISIT TO THE BATTLEFIELDS IN ITALY

— Col **VY GIDH**, VSM (Retd)

While going through the well-conceived ROBA Calendar of 2019, it was very heartening to read about the achievements of our senior Rimcollians who had distinguished themselves during the World War II (WW II) 1939-45. The recount of some of their exploits during the Italian campaign 1943-45 brought back many pleasant memories of our visit to the Italian battlefields in May 2013. I had retired from the Army some years back and our son (a Rimcollian again) who had joined my Battalion, 14 PUNJAB (NABHA AKAL), was posted to a UN Peacekeeping mission in Lebanon. So the family decided to visit Europe. We commenced our visit from Italy, where our unit had fought with distinction during World War II.

A 257 year-old Battalion 14 PUNJAB (NABHA AKAL) was an Indian

State Forces unit, the erstwhile NABHA AKAL INFANTRY before Independence. During the Great War it had served in Mesopotamia and on commencement of WW II, it fought on the North West Frontier, in Eritrea and Cyprus from 1940-43. While the Allies landed in Italy in September 1943, the Indian troops arrived later. Our battalion took part in the Italian Campaign in 1944-45.

In this fierce Campaign, nearly 50,000 Indian soldiers mostly in their 20's, drawn from some of the finest regiments of the Indian Army and Indian State Forces fought for the freedom of Italy during WW II. In Italy, Indians contributed the third largest force, after the Americans and the British. They were in the thick of action on many fronts during this campaign. Indian troops won 6 of the 20 Victoria

Crosses (VC) awarded, but this glory came at a cost. Indian casualties were 23,722 injured, while 5782 soldiers made the supreme sacrifice of their lives. They are commemorated or buried in cemeteries spread all over Italy looked after by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; the main ones being Arezzo, Cassino, Sangro, Forli and Rimini. Our unit lost 52 soldiers whilst over 200 were injured. Two of our unit martyrs are commemorated at Cassino, and another 50 at Forli. Little did I know that these figures were to change.

After a day's stay in Rome, we travelled by train to Cassino, On our request, the Defence Attache in the Embassy of India, Rome, a Captain from the Indian Navy, had kindly tied up our meeting with the Mayor of Cassino. At Cassino Railway Station, we contacted the Secretary to the Mayor. She was



At Cassino War Cemetery



After Signing the Visitors Book



At Forli Cemetery

surprised to learn that we had arrived by train, were strangers to the place and had no knowledge of the location of places in Cassino we intended to visit. She politely asked us to ring up again after 15 minutes, which we did. We had planned to hire a taxi for the day but she requested us to wait, since a vehicle would pick us up to take us around. Sure enough, a black polished car, chauffeured by a smart policeman arrived soon after. Though he did not speak English, we managed to communicate through some commonly used words or sentences in Italian which I had noted earlier! We drove straight to the Cassino War Cemetery, the largest WW II Cemetery in Italy.

An impressive gate of the Cassino War Cemetery, 1939-1945 greets the visitor at the entrance. This Cemetery is

Maj Gen Kashmir Singh Katoch, a Rimcollian was commanding the Dogra Company of 6/13 Frontier Rifles which played a pivotal role in clearing machine gun nests in the Liri Valley, South of Cassino. He was awarded the Military Cross

the largest WW II Cemetery in Italy. There are 4271 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated at the Cassino War Cemetery, out of which 431 are Indian soldiers. The Cassino Memorial which stands within the Cemetery, consists of 30 tall granite slabs. It commemorates more than 4000 men who died during the fighting all over Italy, whose graves are not known. Of these, 1438 are Indians, two of them Sep Gurdoyal Singh and L Nk Chand Singh of Nabha Akal Infantry are at Panel 23 of the Memorial. We paid homage to our two martyrs and other Indian soldiers who had made the supreme sacrifice and signed in the Visitors Book. It is pertinent to note that the Cemetery's two major structures – the Cassino Memorial and the original Register Box are in the Indian style. The

Cemetery and Memorial were designed by Louis de Soisons, who lost a son in action during WW II.

We later drove up to the 1700 feet Monastery Hill which overlooks Cassino, with a beautiful monastery on top. Indian troops had fought valiantly during the battles of Monte Cassino in their attempts to capture this impregnable feature. The Battles of Monte Cassino (also known as the Battle for Rome), fought between January-May 1944, were a series of four assaults by the Allies against the German defences. Cassino witnessed some of the fiercest fighting of the Italian Campaign, the town itself and the dominating Monastery Hill proving the most stubborn obstacle encountered in the advance towards Rome. The Monte Cassino feature was one of the strongest natural defensive positions in Europe from which a depleted German garrison blocked the might of the Allied Italian Campaign for five crucial months. Cassino was the gateway to Rome; it had to fall before D Day. Cassino fell to the Allies on 18 May 1944, while Rome fell on 4 June.

Maj Gen NKD Nanavati, a Rimcollian, 5/5 Maratha Light Infantry was awarded the Military Cross and Mention-in-Dispatches for his bravery during the fourth assault. The unit had been converted into a Machine Gun battalion specifically for 8th Indian Division in Italy and it was the only Indian Army Battalion commanded by a King Commissioned Indian Officer, Lt Col DS Brar. Maj Gen Kashmir Singh Katoch, a Rimcollian was commanding the Dogra Company of 6/13 Frontier Rifles which played a pivotal role in clearing machine gun nests in the Liri Valley, South of Cassino. He was awarded the Military Cross. Another Rimcollian, Maj Gen K Zorawar Singh, of Central India Horse was awarded the Military Cross for leadership during operations near Arezzo in August 1944. His unit was the reconnaissance unit for the 4th Indian Division. Maj Gen Thakur Mahadeo Singh, ½ Punjab Regiment (now 1 PARA SF) was awarded Distinguish Service Order for



At Forli Cemetery

exemplary leadership during the crucial battle for the Idice River. A distinguished Rimcollian, he was later the first Indian Commandant of the Indian Military Academy, and served as Col of the Punjab Regiment from 21 March 1950 to 07 May 1961.

On our way back from Monastery Hill, we walked through the historic Cassino town which had borne the brunt during the fighting. The Mayor, Mr. Guiseppo Golini Petrarcone received us warmly. We talked about the Indian Army's contribution during the World War, and I informed him about the battles fought by our unit at Mt Alberto and Sidichi Cerfoglio, North of

Arezzo, where we earned our Battle Honours and won many awards, including four Military Crosses (MC). The Mayor lauded the role of the Indian troops who had fought bravely in Italy, many of whom had laid down their lives. We thanked the Mayor for his gracious hospitality, and presented him with some Indian sweets, and a small Madhubani painting of Lord Krishna made by my wife. Since we had come all the way from India to visit Cassino and were new to the place, the Mayor had decided to send his own car. It was 2 May, the day German forces in Italy had surrendered to the Allies in 1944.

After a week's stay in Rome, we

visited Forli. Fifty martyrs of NABHA AKAL INFANTRY are commemorated in the Indian Army War Cemetery at Forli. We crossed some of the places along the Eastern Coast of Italy where our unit had fought during the advance of the 10th Indian Division. Ferrara, near the Po River is a major town en route, where the unit was finally located when the news of surrender of German troops in Italy and Victory in Europe was announced by BBC on 02 & 07 May 1945 respectively. Forli was captured on 09 November 1944, after the Allies managed to establish a bridgehead across the Ronco River ten days earlier at Meldola, during breaching of the Gothic Line. Our unit had played a major role in the initial operations. The Forli Indian War Cemetery contains 496 Commonwealth burials, out of which 493 are Indians. The neatly laid out cemetery consists of limestone graves with epitaphs of insignia of each martyr's unit and particulars of the martyr. At one side of the cemetery is the beautiful Forli Cremation Memorial commemorating 769 officers and men of the Indian Army, 50 of which are from are from NABHA AKAL INFANTRY.

We paid our homage by offering flowers. These war dead of the Battalion, who laid down their lives during WW II in 1944-45, had not been visited by anyone from the unit since their cremation overseas 68 years ago. After signing in the Visitors Book, on our way towards the Main Entrance I was suddenly surprised to see a familiar crest of our NABHA AKAL INFANTRY amongst the Punjab Regiment gravestones. It read as:

443 NAIK ZAMIR KHAN
Nabha Akal Infantry 30th November
1944

The name of Naik Zamir Khan did not appear in the list of our 52 martyrs who laid down their lives in Italy, as maintained by the unit. Zamir Khan had died fighting valiantly on 30 Nov 1944, the day our Battalion had successfully captured Mt Alberto, North of Forli as part of a Brigade attack. Our unit was

then part of 20 Indian Infantry Brigade, which consisted of 1/2 Punjab Regiment (now 1 PARA SF), 3/5 Marathas (now 2 PARA SF) and 2/3 GR. Our unit had suffered heavy casualties during the attack and won two Military Crosses and a Battle Honour. There were eight more graves of our martyrs (one JCO and seven men), of which we were not aware earlier. They all had died fighting in end 1944 or early the next year.

I was in Cassino Company in IMA and as GCs, we are generally not well aware of the history and significance of these battles where Indian troops have fought magnificently. Cassino Company would enjoy listening about them." Not many of us get an opportunity to visit these locations outside India and pay homage to the Indian soldiers commemorated there. So prior to attending the Reunion in Dehra Dun in March 2014, I was fortunate to deliver a talk, which everyone enjoyed

Indian soldiers are honoured to this day for their crucial role in the Battles of Monte Cassino and elsewhere in Italy. Many of the 5782 young Indian men who died on Italian soil were in their late teens. These men fought and died

upholding the glorious traditions of the Indian Army. The story of their bravery and sacrifice is still talked about in the Italian cities and quaint villages they helped liberate. We were fortunate to listen to some of these stories during our visit.

An interesting incident is worth mentioning. During a visit to NDA in end 2013, I mentioned about our visit to Monte Cassino to some officers. A young Divisional Officer exclaimed, "Sir, I was in Cassino Company in IMA and as GCs, we are generally not well aware of the history and significance of these battles where Indian troops have fought magnificently. Cassino Company would enjoy listening about them." Not many of us get an opportunity to visit these locations outside India and pay homage to the Indian soldiers commemorated there. So prior to attending the Reunion in Dehra Dun in March 2014, I was fortunate to deliver a talk, which everyone enjoyed. The Company Commander, Cassino Company happened to be a cadet during my tenure as Battalion Commander in NDA. The Senior Under Officer requested me for a copy of my slide presentation and the 20 odd photos I had displayed in the gallery outside. They were planning to create a Motivational Hall in their new company building. I willingly handed over the same and forget about the matter. A year later I was glad to receive photographs of their Motivational Hall in the new complex from the new Company Commander. Good old Cassino Company!

Capt HA Mohite (Kitcheners, 1936-42) was overwhelmed when I presented him with a set of Rimcollian Calendars. The 94 year old veteran from 1/5 Marathas (now 1 Maratha LI) had fought in the Fourth Battle of Monte Cassino. It was very interesting listening to some of his anecdotes, particularly when his unit was able to rescue over 200 precious artworks in Castello di Montegufoni, near Tuscany. Somehow, the role played by the Indian Army in safeguarding the artistic and monumental heritage remains buried in the pages of history! ■

FRIMA, ROBA To Have Annual Tourney In Memory Of Brig Thapa

— Colonel **ARUN MAMGAIN**

This weekend (January 19-20) we had a wonderful golf tournament in memory of a sterling Rimcollian and one of The Happiest Golfers of FRIMA - our departed friend Brig Chander Singh Thapa. In all 90 golfers including ladies and children participated.

Lt Gen S K Jha, Commandant, Indian Military Academy and The Patron blessed the occasion. Kudos to Mrs Vibha Thapa, her sons Lt Col Uday Singh Thapa and Mr Abhay Singh Thapa and their wives for the idea and giving such a brilliant & heartwarming send off to Charlie.

The tournament was sponsored by The Family. They have also instituted a corpus to run the tournament every year. A few of his friends who also supported the cause are: Mr Vivek Ramchandani, Mr Alok Tandon and self.

It was a shotgun start team event played over 18 holes. A large number of us received prizes, Maj Sunny Meitei & self-included. This is the first tournament of its kind in 25 years. It strikes me as such a wonderful send off by family and friends. After all, golfers spend supremely happy hours on the course and would love to believe that they will remain with friends forever - in their favourite haunt.

Sidharth Mishra Adds: Brigadier Thapa had close association with FRIMA course in Dehradun. He had once captured a leopard on the course which had strayed onto the green from the nearby forest. There is plaque on the course which commemorates this event. On retirement to Dehradun, he regularly organised game for the Rimcollians on the morning of March 12, ahead of the reunion. This he did in addition to handling the editorship of The Rimcollian for good five years before he



Brig CS Thapa (standing 3rd from right) with Rimcollian golfers on March 12, 2017

suddenly passed away on March 11, 2018. To commemorate his memory and his contribution towards promoting Rimcollian camaraderie a trophy is being

instituted this year to be awarded to the winning team during the annual Rimcollian tourney held on the morning of March 12 every year. ■



WHERE GALLANTRY IS TRADITION

WORLD WARRIORS

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



WORLD WAR II 1939-45



2/LT (LATER LT GEN)
PREMINDRA SINGH BHAGAT



VICTORIA CROSS

EDITOR: AIR MARSHAL PP REDDY (RETD); CONCEPT/RESEARCH - SIDHARTH MISHRA ; RESEARCH ASSISTANCE: COL SHAILENDER ARYA
PHOTO COURTESY / INPUTS: RIMC ARCHIVE; www.Bharat-Rakshak.com; MAJ GEN SVP SINGH (RETD)



WORLD WAR II 1939-45

Acknowledging their leadership skills after the First WW, British set up Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military college (Later RIMC) in 1922 to prepare Indians for a career in the British forces as commissioned officers. When WW II broke out, Rimcollians were deployed across the globe as Officers and Commanders. Many of them were

decorated and honoured for exemplary leadership and courage in the face of the enemy

Victoria Cross — PS Bhagat
Distinguished Service Order — KS Thimayya, T Mahadeo Singh, VD Jayal & Taj Mohammed Khanzada

Distinguished Flying Cross — KN Kak, NK Shitoley
Military Cross — KS Katoch, NKD Nanavati, K Zorawar Singh, RS Grewal, MG Rajwade, Vishal Mohammed Khan, Mohammed Siddique, Ranbir Singh, K Surendra Singh, NL Kapur, Taj Mohammed Khanzada, Rizaul Karamkhan, Mohammed Aslam.



T H E H E R O E S



2/LT (LATER LT GEN)
PREMINDRA SINGH BHAGAT



GENERAL
KS THIMAYYA



MAJOR GENERAL
THAKUR MAHADEO SINGH



BRIGADIER
VIDYA DHAR JAYAL



BRIGADIER
NAND LAL KAPUR



LT GENERAL
KS KATOCH



MAJOR GENERAL
MG RAJWADE



MAJOR GENERAL
K ZORAWAR SINGH



MAJOR GENERAL
NKD NANAVATI



FLYING OFFICER
KN KAK



AIR COMMODORE
NANU SHITOLEY

World War II redefined the world we live in. Indians fought with distinction in Europe and North Africa against Germany and Italy, as well as in SE Asia against the Japanese, albeit under the British Flag. Indian soldiers were instru-

mental in liberating British colonies such as Singapore and Hong Kong, after surrender of Japanese in Aug 1945. Over 87,000 Indian soldiers (including those from present day Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh) died in

World War II. Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from 1942 asserted the British "couldn't have come through both wars [World War I and II] if they hadn't had the Indian Army."

ICH DIEN - I SERVE



BATTLE OF METEMMA, ABYSSINIA



Second Lieutenant Premindra Singh Bhagat being formally invested with the decoration by the Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow at Viceroy's House in New Delhi on 10 November 1941

From 31 January To 3 February 1941, a column of 3/12 Royal Frontier Force Rifles, including a detachment of 21 Field Company under 2/Lt PS Bhagat, was sent towards Metemma. Bhagat's Bren carrier passed through a heavily mined

road and detonated two mines, the second of which destroyed the carrier killing the driver and a sapper. Bhagat continued in another carrier, defusing mines by hand. Despite close enemy fire, without food or rest for four days, Bhagat cleared

15 minefields over a distance of 55 miles. After having another Bren carrier blown up under him on February 2, which resulted in punctured eardrums, he was evacuated. He was decorated with the Victoria Cross.

THE HERO



2/LT (LATER LT GEN)
PREMINDRA SINGH BHAGAT



VICTORIA CROSS

ICH DIEN - I SERVE



JAPANESE SURRENDER



Japanese foreign affairs minister Mamoru Shigemitsu signs the Japanese Instrument of Surrender On September 2, 1945

THE HERO



GENERAL
KS THIMAYYA



DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE ORDER

Kodandera Subayya Thimayya was in 1944 posted to his old regiment as Commanding Officer of 8/19th Hyderabad, which he led with outstanding success during the Burma campaign. Thimayya was promoted to the acting

rank of Brigadier in the field in 1945 and for his outstanding service in battle, awarded the much coveted Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and also a Mention-in-Dispatches. Timmy represented the country during the surrender of Japanese

in Singapore, followed by the surrender of Japanese in the Philippines. At the ceremony of Japanese surrender in Singapore, he signed on behalf of India. He was awarded the 'Keys to Manila' when he was sent to Philippines.

ICH DIEN - I SERVE



PRECURSOR FOR UN



Soldiers of the British 8th Army fighting in the Italian campaign

During the last phases of the World War II, Lt Colonel Thakur Mahadeo Singh received his DSO in the Italian Campaign in the battle for the Idice River. His Battalion, the 1st Punjab Regiment lost 35 men in this war in South Italy. The Indian

soldiers fought against the Germans right from the first assault on the Gothic Line in August 1944, to the last assault on the Senio River in April 1945. His battalion fought shoulder-to-shoulder with soldiers from other nationalities as part of the

Allied Forces, which in way became precursor for the United Nations. Just before Independence Colonel T Mahadeo Singh was appointed the Commandant of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, the first Indian to hold the post.

THE HERO



MAJOR GENERAL
THAKUR MAHADEO SINGH

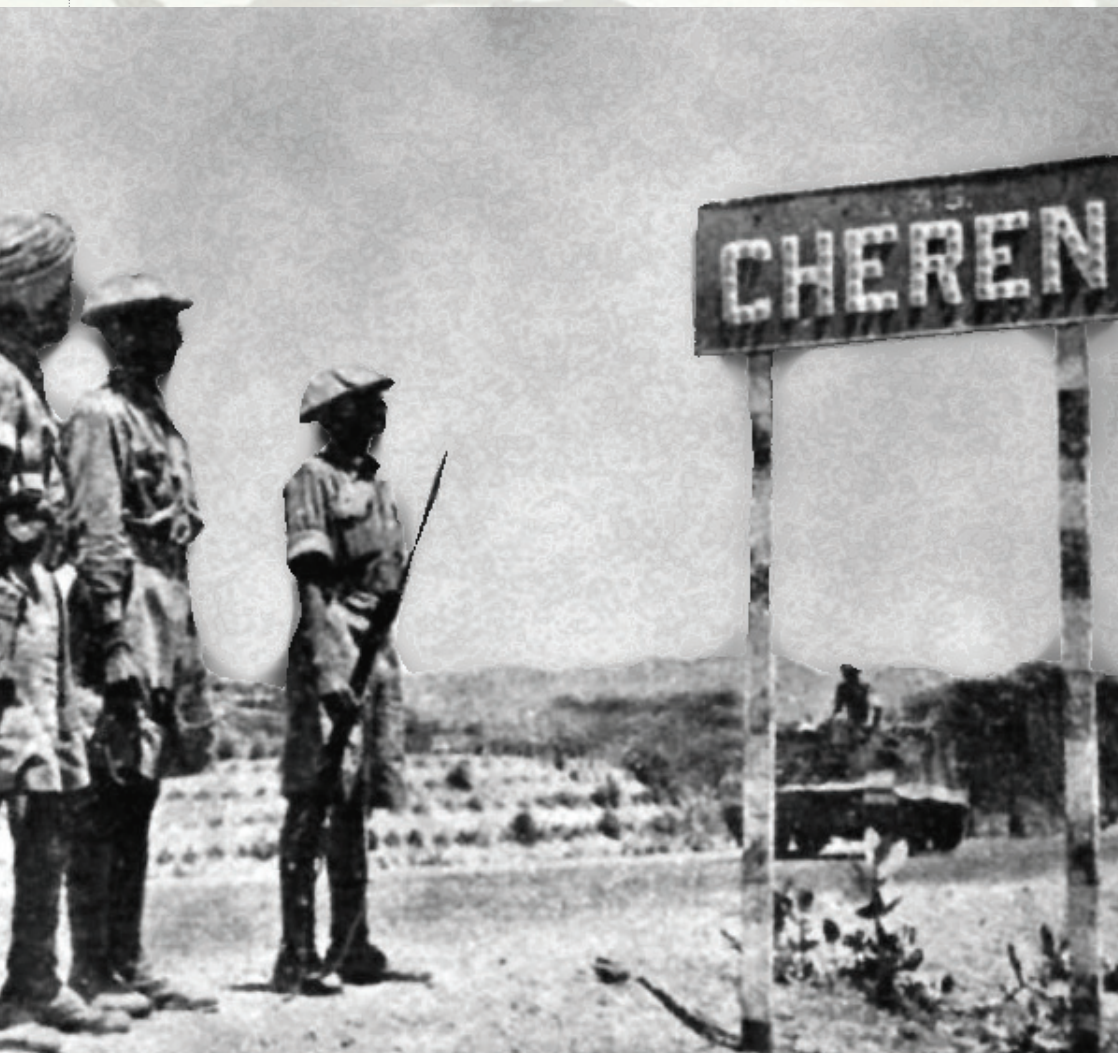


DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE ORDER

ICH DIEN - I SERVE



EAST AFRICAN CAMPAIGN



Indian Soldiers on way to Keren after a dogged battle leading to expulsion of Italians from East Africa

THE HERO



BRIGADIER
VIDYA DHAR JAYAL



DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE ORDER

Brigadier Vidya Dhar Jayal won his DSO in World War II in the East African Campaign. A Major at that time with the 6th Battalion of 13th Frontier Force Rifles (6/13 FFR), he displayed sheer courage and grit during the Battle of Keren against

the Italians, a tough battle fought from 5 February 1941 to 1 April 1941 between a mixed Italian army of regular and colonial troops and the attacking British and Free French forces. The town of Keren, in the colony of Italian Eritrea, was of strategic

importance to both the Italian and the British forces. The capture of Castle Hill by Jayal's company won the battle for the Battalion, on which the Brigade Commander said, "How they reached their objective is beyond my comprehension."



BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN, EGYPT



THE HERO



BRIGADIER
NAND LAL KAPUR



MILITARY CROSS

The capture of Ruweisat Ridge by 5th Indian Brigade in July 1942 was the turning point in the battle

Brigadier Nand Lal Kapur was commissioned in 1941 into the 4th Bn (Outram's Rifles), 6th Rajputana Rifles, then serving with 10th Indian Division at Mersa Matruh in the Western Desert. The Axis Army was led by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the

Allied troops by General Claude Auchinleck. In mid-July 1942, the 5th Indian Brigade was in front-line near Ruweisat Ridge. On 17 July, Lt Nand Lal Kapur commanded an extremely hazardous operation with his coy facing fire from German tanks. Ordering

men to lie down, Kapur kept walking in front of them, causing the commander of the tanks to suspect a trap. The situation remained unchanged until dark, when Lt Kapur withdrew his company. His courage earned him the Military Cross.



THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN



Troops from Central Indian Horse take German soldiers Prisoner of War in Italy in 1944

THE HERO



MAJOR GENERAL
K ZORAWAR SINGH



MILITARY CROSS

On receiving commission, **Maj Gen K Zorawar Singh** joined Central India Horse. During the Italian Campaign, CIH was a reconnaissance unit for the 4th Indian Div. Singh was made second-in-command of B Sqn. On 3 August 1944 Singh led a reconnaissance

patrol towards Casale Vecchia, which is N-W of Arezzo. The objective was to determine the location of the German frontline and eliminate any Germans encountered. During the patrol, a German reconnaissance force was encountered. The result of this

engagement left two enemy dead and three others taken prisoner. Singh was awarded the Military Cross for leadership during the operation. In October 1944 the CIH was sent to Greece to stabilise the country following the withdrawal of German forces.



DESTROYING WINTER LINE



Indian troops carry out snow patrols during the Battle Of Monte Cassino

The Battle of Monte Cassino (also known as the Battle for Rome and the Battle for Cassino) was a costly series of four assaults by the Allies against the Winter Line in Italy held by Axis forces during the Italian Campaign of World

War II. The intention was to break through to Rome. In this Battle, Dogra Company of 6th Battalion Frontier Force Rifles commanded by Kashmir Singh Katoch played a pivotal role in achieving victory clearing many of the machine

gun nests. Katoch was awarded the Military Cross. Post-Independence Katoch worked in many important appointments before retiring as the Vice Chief of the Indian Army. He was also awarded Padma Bhushan.

THE HERO



MAJOR GENERAL
KS KATOCH



MILITARY CROSS



BATTLE OF MONTE CASSINO



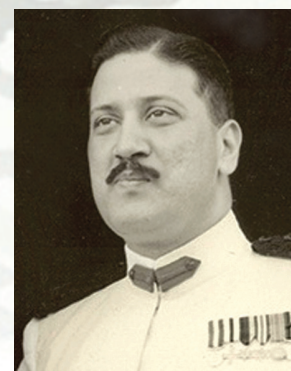
The Cassino War Cemetery Memorial which commemorates over 4,000 Commonwealth servicemen who took part in the Italian campaign whose graves are not known

Maj Gen Nalin Kumar Dhirajlal Nanavati was a Major with the 5th Royal Maratha Light Infantry, when the forces were ordered to go and fight in WWII. The battalion initially served in the Middle East before becoming a Machine Gun battalion in Italy.

The 4th Indian Division was tasked to capture Monte Cassino. The Division lost about 4000 men on the approaches to Cassino before the objective was finally captured and won many medals for gallantry. Nanavati won a Military Cross and Mention-

in-Dispatches for his bravery. He later became Commandant of the Indian Military Academy. Unfortunately Nanavati died while commanding an Infantry Division in J&K in 1963 in a helicopter crash with several other members of the top brass.

THE HERO



MAJOR GENERAL
NKD NANAVATI



MILITARY CROSS



BATTLE OF IMPHAL



An IAF Hurricane is marshaled in after a photo-reconnaissance over the Japanese lines, Imphal, 1944

THE HERO



FLYING OFFICER
KN KAK



DFG MEDAL

The Battle for Imphal that raged from March to July 1944 was essentially a siege operation by the Japanese against the Allied forces concentrating in the Imphal valley. Flying Hurricanes, the No.1 Squadron of the Indian Air Force flew

nearly 2000 sorties during the battle for Imphal. By the time the Squadron earned its turn for rest, it had earned nine DFCs and 1 MBE, the most that any of the nine Squadrons in the IAF had achieved till then. The first of the DFCs went to

Squadron Leader Arjan Singh, the CO, who later became Marshal Of the Indian Air Force. Among other decorated was young Flying Officer Khemendra Nath Kak, who lost his life during one of the operations.



TIGERS IN IMPHAL



An Hawker Hurricane Mark IIBs of No. 1 Squadron IAF undergoing maintenance at Imphal Main

Air Commodore Narayanrao Khanderao 'Nanu' Shitoley got his posting to No.1 (Tiger) Squadron at Imphal, in the summer of 1944. The Squadron spent close to fourteen months of intense, sustained action, and on the 26th March 1945, they

were relieved by the 7 Squadron. This brought to a close an operational record few squadrons in any air force can boast of - 4,813 sorties totalling 7,219 hours over 14 months, an average of 343 sorties and 516 hours per month. Of this

Nanu Shitoley had flown 300 hours on Operations in less than eight months, getting him the Distinguished Flying Cross. Nanu retired in April 1975 as SASO (Senior Air Staff Officer) South Western Air Command, Jodhpur.

THE HERO



AIR COMMODORE
NANU SHITOLEY



DFG MEDAL



INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY



Subhash Chandra Bose being presented a Guard of Honour by the troops of the Indian National Army

THE HERO



The 1st Guerrilla Brigade of the INA was under the Command of **Gen (INA) Shahnawaz Khan**. By the beginning of January 1944, it had reached Rangoon, where two battalions remained to guard the border between Burma and India near Haka while the third advanced into India and took part in the Battles of Imphal and Kohima. Later the INA trials at Red Fort made Shahnawaz a legend.

World War II also hastened the process of Indian Independence. In 1943 Subhash Chandra Bose arrived in Tokyo and after a prolonged discussion, Japan declared Indian National Army under Bose to be the Army of *Arzi Hukumat-e-*

Azad Hind (Government of Independent India In Exile). Brig NS 'Tony' Bhagat, Rimcollian and first course IMA, writes that a large number of officers including Rimcollians joined INA after it was clear that the sole aim of INA was to make

British quit India. In addition to Tony Bhagat, several other Rimcollians including Shahnawaz Khan, Niranjan Singh Gill, Taj Mohammed Khanzada and Inayatullah Hasan played an important role in the movement.

STROLL THROUGH THE KILLING FIELDS IN SRI LANKA

— Wg Cdr **UNNI KARTHA**

Since time immemorial, the island of erstwhile Ceylon, because of its diverse flora, fauna, rainforest landscapes, scenic highlands and sandy beaches, and above all the overtly friendly peoples, used to be called the 'island of serendipity'. It was the place that Europeans flocked for rest, recuperate and suntan, and to find their 'kama or karma'. Then came their independence from the British in 1948 with ethnic ratio of 75% Sinhalese, 20.5% Tamils (plantation labour imported by the British 300 yrs earlier), and rest minority groups. In 1972, the politically shrewd Bandaranayke changed Ceylon to Sri Lanka (SL) and made a new constitution for 'Democratic Socialist Republic of the Sinhalese', which turned 25% of the nation into stateless, hope-less refugee class with no citizenship or civil rights. This was to eventually lead to three and half decades of the bloodiest civil war fought anywhere on earth, displacing over one and half million people, killing more than two hundred thousand, and maiming more than a million Tamils as well as Sinhalese, ruining the tiny island's economy to penury and creating indelible racial hatred within its diaspora.

1. Maj Gen Jose & Teresa Manvalan
2. Brig Baljit & Kamaljit Gill
3. Col Rajaram & Meena
4. Col Jamwal & Indra
5. Col Pradeep & Baljit Jawandas
6. Col Ramkumar & Vimla
7. Brig Vijay Gusain
8. Brig Mohan Nikkam
9. Wg Cdr Unni Kartha

We (see list above), Dec 1969 batch mates from the National Defence Academy, middle ranking officers in our



late thirties in 1987 commissioned in 1970-71, all except me are part of the scarred and mauled veterans of the misadventure of GoI which sent a 'peace keeping force' to SL during 1987-90, which soon turned to 'peace enforcement force' and finally wound up taking the Tamil guerrillas head on, in the bloodiest war ever fought by Indian Army, Navy and AF. We buried or cremated many of our dear dead friends and comrades in the battle fields in SL, about 1500 of them, and brought back around 12,000 maimed and wounded, in a war which had nothing to do with us. At that time we did not know, or reason why, we were ordered to go and die in SL. We believed that someone in GoI in Delhi would know why, or care.

Three decades later, on 10 Feb 18, now approaching our 70s, we once again went to SL, not to imbibe suntan, kama or karma as tourists, but as aged veterans, to uphold our dharma and bounden duty, to take a walk through the

old killing fields in Northern SL, to pay respect to those whom we left behind.

We flew SL Air and entered through Colombo like all tourists. A 15 seater, very comfortable mini bus with driver, attendant and an English speaking guide (very resourceful and dynamic Mr Lal), collected us at the airport and stayed with us till we returned to India on 19 Feb.

On 10th Feb we stayed overnight in the excellent Carolina Beach Resort at Chilaw, one hour drive north of Colombo, and drank JWBL on the beach to reminisce our military career, with our wives yodelling like sopranos, because we were behaving like teens !!

Next morning on 11 Feb, the mini bus took us North to Jaffna, a long 7 hrs drive (with lunch stop at Anuradhapura), on the excellent Chinese built double lane Route 28, through Vavunia, Kilinochchi and Elephant Pass to Jaffna, all Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE)'s strongholds of the past,



every inch reminding us of old times in a formidable war that we too fought with LTTE with all out might, and did not win.

The photo alongside is that of a water tank used by LTTE in their stronghold at Kilinochchi, as a strategic observation post and sand bagged machine gun nest at its top. It was toppled by SL army commandos using plastic explosives placed at the base in their last round battle, LTTE vs SL Army after IPKF was kicked out unceremoniously by newly elected SL President Premadasa.

Next door, besides the highway, is another strange war memorial, a larger than life armour piercing artillery shell embedded in a concrete block.. They are symbolic and remain as sentinel of the violence of the bitter, long and hard fought war between LTTE and SL army after IPKF left.

In Jaffna, we stayed three nights at the reasonable 'Tilco' hotel situated next to the fort and lagoon within sight of the twinkling lights on the modern Allaippidi and Karaitivu causeways built by the Chinese. Seeing the string of lights across the lagoon, I was reminded of Atanu Guru of 125 Sqn, in a Mi-25 on 27 Oct 87, interdicting five LTTE heavy transports carrying massive quantities of ammunition and explosives on old Karaitivu causeway, creating explosions that killed more than 150 LTTE and could be heard 30 km away.



On 12th at sunrise, we went for a walk like good old soldiers around Jaffna fort and incredibly bumped into a most friendly, well informed cheerful and energetic Lankan on a cycle, the SL Income Tax Commissioner of Jaffna!!

For next one and half hours, on our persistent urging over 'decoction' coffee in a Tamil tea shop, blaring Tamil devotional songs, he gave us the current socio-economic-polico-demographic brief of Jaffna and SL, and efforts to change the demography, encourage farming and fishing, creation of import substitutions. We couldn't have asked for a more educated insightful briefing on the past, present and future of SL, especially because Rajapaksa (ex-

President) had given a drubbing to Sirisena and Wickremesinghe (current President & PM of SL) in the election on previous day, in which the 21% SL Tamil population, still denied citizenship, had abstained from voting.

We started our adventure from the Jaffna fort (built by the Portuguese in 1618), where Jose was the BM and Mohan the DAAG & DQ of 41 Brigade under Bde Cdr Manjit Singh during 1987-89. Other than the moat and 25 feet thick indestructible outer walls of the fort made of coral and lime, everything inside has been reduced to rubble by repeated shelling and aerial bombing by SL forces after IPKF left.



Jose took us around and explained how it used to be in 1987, buzzing with hyperactivity as his headquarters, and even managed to locate the old operations room amongst the rubble!! Jaffna fort is now open to public, a well maintained archaeological edifice, with no sign of the terrible war that was fought by SL armed forces to dislodge LTTE from within its strategic confines after IPKF left.



TRAVEL NOTES

Our next stop was the burnt out 'Jaffna Library', the saddest edifice and sentinel of the civil war. This charred and burnt out complex once housed some of the most ancient written history, art, culture, philosophy, theosophy, perceptions of intellectuals of the entire south Asian region. Now lost forever during the military jostling between LTTE and SL army for control of Jaffna.



Afterwards we went looking for the Jaffna University stadium, where the biggest tragedy of Indian special heli-borne clandestine operations in war had taken place.

On the night of 11/12th Oct 87, 120 troop of 10 Para Commando (Special Forces) and 360 from 13 Sikh Li Delta Company (who had just arrived by air at Palali from Gwalior), were tasked to storm Jaffna University, then a strong hold of LTTE, where all the leaders of LTTE including Prabhakaran and his deputy Mahattaya were expected to be present for a meeting. The purpose of the operation was to snatch the top leadership and incapacitate LTTE.

Like all audacious quickly made war plans, nothing went right in this one too, because the LTTE had received prior warning of the attack and were well prepared, creating complete blackout of the area surrounding the university, machine gun nests on top of all surrounding buildings and well sited, well-armed, reception parties around the stadium.

The Jaffna University operation was launched at 0100 hrs on 12th Oct 87, with half-moon condition, but low clouds that drifted in obscuring the moon. For one reason or the other, mainly severe battle damage to the four

Mi-8s, instead of 120 Commandos from 10 Para and 360 troopers from 13 Sikh Li (total 480), the heli-lift managed to insert only a total of about 148-150 men. Many of them from Sikh Li were butchered by LTTE. There was a huge extrication exercise using tanks and BMPs which followed the un-mined railway line. 10 Para (SF), adept at such clandestine warfare on man-pack basis, went to ground and managed to survive with fewer casualties. Only one or two out of the 60 odd simpler Sikh Li infantry troopers lived to tell his tale. The mission was an ill-conceived disaster by all counts.

After the prolonged battles between the LTTE and SL army after IPKF left, there is now very little left of the old Jaffna University. It is all destroyed and new complex is being rebuilt in fits and starts with foreign aid. The stadium looked the same. An informal cricket match amongst boys was in progress. Life goes on despite cataclysmic predations of man, in his quest for a home land.



We then drove to Palali airfield to check out; after all, that is where the IPKF story began in 1987. Palali then was simply an 1800 mtrs runway with rudiments of a habitat. It is now a full-fledged highly developed fortified cantonment with an impressive barricaded gate, most modern buildings and manicured lawns. Strangely we didn't see any Air Force, or airplanes in Palali. It is now the headquarters of the SL Army, Northern Command, with three Divisions of Special Operations Commandos, and the naval base SLNS Uttara at Kankasanturai next door.

Within 20 minutes, we were invited to the officer's mess for high tea, and even a wooden elephant as a parting



memento by the General commanding the Northern Command.

An escort was provided for us to pay our respect at the impressive memorial for the martyrs of 10 Para (SF), built by 10 Para ten years later using their regimental funds, but immaculately



maintained by SL army within Palali airbase complex. Strangely intriguing, we also found six unmarked graves of Indian soldiers adjacent to the 10 Para memorial. Perhaps these were graves made by Indian Army during Op Pawan, without names or head stones. The SL General told us that they were not graves of SL personnel and were made by IPKF. We paid obedience at the memorial as well as the unknown graves.

We also went to take a look at Jaffna hospital, which had seen some fierce fighting between LTTE and Indian Army in 1987, that unfortunately earned us much negative publicity from 'human rights activists' world-wide. The hospital too has a new look, the depredations of



armed 'Ranjit' helicopters of 31 Air OP. Once IPKF left, LTTE once again occupied these positions and were their main supply bases for war material and other logistics smuggled from abroad. The SL army had to do a repeat, a series of prolonged bloody battles to drive the LTTE out.



war has been effaced physically, but remains as scars in the minds of the Tamil populace of Jaffna.

The only thing standing untouched in Jaffna by the civil war in Northern SL, is the famous Nallur Kandaswami Temple for the Tamil deity Murugan. We visited the temple, with all sincerity, to pay our humble obeisance, to the Lord and to pray for our dead brothers, adhering to the local customs and traditions.



by SL army around 2008, much after IPKF was withdrawn. The beaches were empty of all activity, except a few soldiers dismantling a 'large pandal', lights, PA system, and stacking plastic chairs used for some VIP visit during the political electioneering few days earlier.

We then travelled East, to the infamous 'Elephant Pass', a narrow flat flood plain, a choke point surrounded by the vast Jaffna lagoon, connecting the road and railway line between Jaffna peninsula and rest of SL, which had repeatedly seen some of the bloodiest battles between LTTE vs SL army (1st round), with IPKF (2nd round) and finally back with SL army (3rd and last round). During the three and half decades of continuous civil war, military control of this narrow stretch of land was of utmost strategic importance for the survival of the populous Jaffna peninsula inhabited by Tamils.



On 13 Feb, early morning, we set out to visit Point Pedro, Valvedditturai and Kankasanturai, the northernmost parts of SL, where the naval wing of LTTE had once held fort and which IPKF had to wrestle from them, effectively using tanks, APCs, artillery, Mi-25s and the

At Point Pedro, which once was a busy fishing port, there was nothing left standing except a pole installed by LTTE on which there were markers pointing the direction and distance of every littoral nation in the Indian ocean, all except India just 50 km away, in the direction that I am pointing at in the photo !!!

At Kankasanturai, there was a war memorial proclaiming 'Unity in diversity, is the strength of SL', at the site where Tamil 'Sea Tigers' were finally decimated

In a fierce push between LTTE and SL army on 13 Jul 91, LTTE used four ingeniously modified bulldozers, with one inch armour plating, fitted with heavy machine guns and filled with explosives to overrun the SL army

TRAVEL NOTES

garrison and road blocks. The last of these monstrous contraptions reached Jaffna garrison around the railway station.. Had it been detonated, it may have wiped out half the SL army. There arose an extraordinary 26 years old soldier of SL army, Cpl Gamini Kularatna, from 6th Bn of Sinha Rgt, who managed to climb up the monstrous contraption from the back and lob a grenade, killing all the four man LTTE crew inside, as well as Gamini. In recognition of his extraordinary bravery, and supreme sacrifice, Gamini was awarded 'Param Weera Vibhushana' (posthumous) like Indian Param Vir Chakra, the highest military award. A memorial next to Jaffna railway station stands testimony. In a hut nearby, on the press of a button, a large video screen comes alive to show live footages of the war and the action involving the monstrous armour plated bulldozer and how it was neutralised.



Further down the road, is a massive, strange looking war memorial, encapsulating the final victory of SL army over LTTE at Elephant Pass, a bronze tear drop bubble representing SL, encased and protected within two military hands, symbolises territorial integrity of SL. a rather morbid symbol of Tamil oppression.

We then went further east to Mullaittivu, where Special Forces of the SL army cornered and decimated LTTE. In the middle of a pond, with white lotus and strange water lilies, stood a huge grotesque memorial that leaves an ever lasting impression on all. The memorial emboldens all, with a huge bronze stature of a SL soldier with an AK-57 in one hand and the SL flag in the other,

promising that ethnic strife and civil war will not ever happen in SL, as long as SL Army is in charge. The army plays a significant role in SL politics now.

There were no sign of policemen in Northern SL, just the army. Silent, unarmed, but watchful, at every memorial, every street corner, even on the highways. The discipline amongst the Tamil populace in Northern SL is visibly discernable. No honking of horns, very orderly traffic that stops automatically if there are pedestrians crossing, no jay walking, no cattle on the roads, no argumentative people now. We saw a silent Tamil funeral procession, on the sidewalk and not in the middle of the road. Once in a while, they let off fire crackers, perhaps to help liberate the soul and accelerate its progress to eternity. Perhaps the fire crackers were to simulate the gun fire of three decades of civil war, to imply martyrdom in war. It was symbolic of a demoralised society, reeling from the aftermath of prolonged civil war, which failed to improve their stateless destitution.

Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the revolutionary LTTE, his wife and three children, were hunted down and killed on 18 May 2009, at or around Nandikadal lagoon, near Vellamullivaikkal in Puthumatalan (near Mullaittivu), by a select group led by Sgt Wijesinghe from Commando (Special Forces) unit 4VIR, then under the command of Lt Col Aluvihare. That ended the civil war in SL. There was nothing on ground to indicate the end of that terrible saga.

However, we got to meet 'Anbu' and his wife 'Laxmi', two LTTE cadre who surrendered to SLA, few of the survivors of that war. LTTE were so motivated for Eelam that they fought till the last man was killed. Anbu was an exception. He was a weapon instructor and expert in making improvised explosives. His wife was from the infamous suicide bomb squad when they met and fell in love. Fearing retribution from LTTE supremo, they ran away and lived under the protection of SL army till the end of the war.

Anbu and his wife now eke a living

fishing, living in part of a building, a Tamil resettlement project by Govt of SL. He offered us a glass of 'Toddy', a peace offering, which we gladly accepted. Like all soldiers, we had no personal quarrel with Anbu, his wife or toddler who were enemies of IPKF and had killed or maimed Indian soldiers.

A surprising find, mainly because of our resourceful guide Pal, was a secluded spot off the highway, covered from all sides by impregnable thickly grown palm forest, about a km from the beachfront at Mullaittivu. It was the deserted naval R&D centre of LTTE where an incredible array of ingenious engineering of military hardware was crudely exhibited.



To begin with, was a dry dock / water tank which could be flooded through a sluice leading to backwaters of the Nanthi Kadal lagoon. A huge wave generator (inclined circular plates on a huge shaft) was lying aside. This tank was used to test the stability and control of extremely agile, highly hydrodynamic low silhouette fibre glass high speed motor torpedo boats and midget submarines (photos above). Also on

display were torpedo tubes, rocket launcher on articulated hinge, powerful marine engines, rockets, bombs, aircraft engines and props etc indicators of LTTE's incredible indigenous engineering ability to do research and development to produce their own home grown weapon systems and continue the war indefinitely.



On 14th, we relocated to Rajarata Hotel in Anuradhapura. We stopped at Vanunia air base, Since the base commander was not available, we could not gain entry into the airfield complex to relive incredible memories of our experiences during IPKF days when Vavunia was a most active base for air and ground operations.

During the closing phase of IPKF in SL, when a newly elected President Premadasa found it expedient to make truce with LTTE, and to provide it arms to fight IPKF, then Lt Col Ramkumar, a missile man, was suddenly mobilised from India to go and set up a training camp in Paranthan to arm and train Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), a similar bunch as LTTE, to fight LTTE when IPKF withdrew. Ram does not know whose idea it was. Ram armed and trained 3 batches, with 250-275 EROS cadre in each batch, at a large hastily put together camp at Paranthan, constantly sniped at and harassed by LTTE. He lost his 2nd in command and many trainees in fire fights with LTTE, but did what he was asked to do, till he withdrew from SL with IPKF in 1990. We went looking for his training camp in Paranthan, a few km east of the highway. All makeshift buildings were destroyed in war and the jungles had obliterated all traces of his



large old training camp. Ram believes that many EROS trainees of his, who were not killed by LTTE, joined up with them after he left, to fight the SL Army!

Puliyankulam, north of Vavunia astride the road and railway line, was a strategic defensive point, a line of control between North and South; controlled by LTTE, IPKF and SL army, turn by turn. Baljit as a Lt Col was in command of 12 Jat of Indian Army at Puliyankulam in 89-90. He was under constant attack by LTTE, since his job was to keep the strategic south to north road / rail lines open. Ambushes of road opening parties by LTTE had claimed many lives of his men, including his favourite subordinate, Maj Michael Lewis.

Baljit couldn't rest content till we went to Puliyankulam. Like a man possessed, he got off the bus and ran into the jungles, in what once used to be his camp, surrounded by barbed wire and anti-personnel mines. We followed him. Baljit took us unerringly through shrub and jungles, old barbed wire fencings, barking dogs, mine field, to a spot where he had buried Michael and cremated large number of his men. I could feel their presence, lined up in a squad with Michael leading. And when Baljit saluted them, I could hear the silent whispers of the dead Jats, 'CO Sahib did not abandon us, he has come to bid us farewell'. It was indeed the most emotional and poignant moment of our life as old soldiers, *raison d'être* of our visit.

Afterwards we went to central Colombo, to visit the well maintained IPKF war memorial alongside a similar



memorial for Lankans, to lay wreaths for 1500 odd old colleagues from Army & Navy in whose memory this monument was built by GoI, and pay for its upkeep. Despite the herculean air support for IPKF, the IAF fortunately had no casualties in SL (perhaps it was because LTTE had not yet acquired shoulder fired missiles). Many of the helicopters were shot at, suffered mechanical damages and forced landings, but all air crew survived).

We then travelled, like all tourists southwards, to Hikkaduwa, to the Lavanga resort near Galle, to imbibe a bit of the sun, sand and limitless eternity of the Indian Ocean, to forget war and be like all ordinary senior citizens seeking global peace and prosperity for mankind. Perhaps the trip helped exorcise the ghosts of comrades and enemy from our minds. In the end, we were, and still are, pawns of political ambitions of individuals everywhere. Ours is not to reason why, but to do and die.

To our slain comrades in SL, we raised a toast, 'Cheers, we may not come back, but will meet you soon in Valhalla'. ■

GENTLEMEN EXTRAORDINAIRE

— Brig **RK BOSE (RETD), 1949-52, Ranjit**

Any article written by a Rimcollian relates to the time he spent at RIMC, and this one is no different as this is the common bond. However, what is emphasized here is the debt we owe our teachers in RIMC who not only taught us academics but also inculcated values which have withstood the passage of time and the bonding which all Rimcollians have, no matter when we were at the College. It is something unique and precious.

In particular, this is also a tribute to two Englishmen who in my time were the Principal, Mr H Catchpole and the Vice Principal Mr EJ Watson respectively. This is not to decry the guidance we received from our Indian masters – Messrs RC

Singhal, Panditji, SP Sharma and the rest, but these two left a very deep impression on me and I am sure on the colleagues of my generation.

My father and I reached Dehradun on a cold January morning in 1949 and after a quick breakfast in the Railway Dining Room, proceeded to RIMC in a tonga. After getting down near the office, the Peon came running and told my father, not to dispose off the tonga. We wondered why as my father had planned to stay the day with me before going back by the evening train to Lucknow. The reason was soon explained when we met Mr Catchpole, all 6'2" of him who towered over my father 5'4" and me 5', when we met

him. He was all charm and grace and after a cup of tea, had us shown around the premises by one of the masters. He then told my father that I was now in his care and my father was free to go back to Dehra and catch up with whatever he wanted to do before going back by the evening train. My father, though taken aback, complied and bid me good-bye. This was my introduction to the great man who grilled me for an hour, took a test in Maths and English and sent me to Ranjit Section (formerly Roberts) to my Section Commander, who was in his last term and preparing to go to IMA, as he was over age for the newly started Joint Services Wing in Clement Town.



Mr Hugh Catchpole



Mr EJ Watson

When I joined RIMC, it had a depleted look as 55 Rimcollians had gone to the JSW to start the 1st Course. One of them, NC Suri, went on to become the CAS. The Sections which had 55 Cadets had hardly 35 and our batch of 12 made hardly any dent in the gap. It took RIMC up to my senior term in Jan 52 to makeup this drop in numbers to come back to 150 cadets. There were some older boys like my Section Commander, who were over age and they soon joined the IMA / AF Academy. Such was Mr Catchpole's clout with the powers to be that on his recommendation, the Rimcollians who joined the 1st, 2nd and 3rd courses skipped the UPSC written exam and appeared for the SSB directly. It was from the 4th Course onwards that they had to go through the exam.

We soon got into the swing of things and Mr Catchpole and Mr Watson were here, there and everywhere. Both of them were bachelors and besides teaching us, played hockey, cricket and football with us. Mr Catchpole was an Oxford Blue in Cricket, Hockey and Squash and had opened the bowling for Hampshire before he left for India to start his teaching career. He picked up a MA in Hindi from Banaras Hindu University and I was taught Preliminary Hindi by an Englishman. On one occasion whilst batting, I was hit on the head by an in swinger from Mr Catchpole and spent three days in MH Dehradun. The Matron and Mr Catchpole came twice a day to see me, bringing something or the other.

Mr Catchpole taught us English History and English besides Basic Hindi and Mr Watson. Science. Both were very strict with their lessons and those who did not do their homework or were slacking, were administered six of the best by Mr Catchpole in the Junior Library before games. Where he hid those canes one will never know, but hours of diligent searching for them, never revealed their hiding place. Both of them made it a point to prowl around Prep time and woe betide anyone reading storybooks or comics during that time.

I started life in RIMC in class IIIA and my stay in RIMC was 3 ½ years as compared to the four or five years the others spent. I appeared in the Senior Cambridge and UPSC exams before I was 15 years old, the latter against the wishes of both Mr Catchpole and Mr Watson, who wanted me to do the HSC before going to JSW. Unfortunately, my father was going through a financial crisis and I decided to get off his back as

Mr Catchpole and Mr Watson were here, there and everywhere. Both of them were bachelors and besides teaching us, played hockey, cricket and football with us. Mr Catchpole was an Oxford Blue in Cricket, Hockey and Squash and had opened the bowling for Hampshire before he left for India to start his teaching career. He picked up a MA in Hindi from Banaras Hindu University and I was taught Preliminary Hindi by an Englishman

soon as possible. I feel I lost only by not staying on in RIMC for another year, as I had only my last term as a senior.

After the Senior Cambridge exam in Nov 1951, those of us who opted to go for the UPSC exam in Jan end, were asked to stay behind during the winter vacation as the syllabi for UPSC was completely different. Both Mr Catchpole and Watson, Mr Ram Singh, Mr Shingal patiently coached us during the mornings and gave us plenty of homework. In the afternoons, Mr Catchpole took a couple of us by turns to the FRI to teach us motor cycle driving (he had a Bullet). Some one used to borrow his gun to go shooting in the

nearby tea gardens and one or the other his ancient bicycle (which he had bought when he first come to India) to go to town for a couple of hour.

On the Christmas eve, I managed to bash up the M/C with Mr Catchpole watching, another got a bullet jammed in the breech of his gun and one who had taken his bicycle came back with the front wheel (it had come off near The Doon School) in one hand and the rest of the bike in the other. For all this, we were given plum cake and tea and told we were being let off because it was Christmas eve. After we cleared the UPSC exam (all 8 of us), Mr Catchpole took me back to FRI to see that I had got the hang of driving the M/C. After he was satisfied, on two Saturdays, he gave me Rupees 20, told his driver to hop behind on the bike to ensure no cops caught me and told me to go to town and come back before sunset. I stopped doing this as it was becoming addictive and in the face of strong disapproval from my Section Master, Mr SN Sang. Mr Watson, though far more reserved, was always available for any help one wanted. When my parents changed me from an Air Force Cadet to Army, after I had been selected for the Air Force, Mr Watson and Mr Catchpole wrote strong letters to my father, deploring the decision.

All in all, RIMC gave me confidence in myself, to speak up for what one felt right (often got me into trouble) to help others and strive for perfection in whatever one did. We owe it to not only to Mr Catchpole and Mr Watson but other teachers who imbibed in us values which have kept us going all these years. In fact our school motto should be 'Never Give Up'. I wonder which other institution develops such bonding with its alma mater. I also genuinely feel that succeeding generations who did not have an exposure to Messrs Catchpole and Watson, have really missed something in their experience of life. The contribution to my life of these two Gentlemen Extraordinary has been in calculable and I am sure this will apply to others who enjoyed their tutelage and guidance during their stay at RIMC. ■

IN PURSUIT OF A CHILDHOOD DREAM

— THOTA JAWAHARLAL (JAWAHAR) Ranjit, 81 Course

MMy school No was 300 and we joined school in Jan 1962 and graduated Dec 1966. It all started in Mar 1962, when I read the book, "[Reach for the Sky](#)" by Wg Cdr Douglas Bader, DSO, DFC, double bar, which I had borrowed from the library in RIMC. And on 13 Mar 1962, a RIMCOLLIAN, Wg Cdr Subbiah (If I recall the name correctly) landed in an Air Force MI-4, on the cricket pitch. As kids just 11 years old, we ran and he showed us around the helicopter. My father would not let me join Air Force, saying it was too risky. I however kept my dream alive. I had to work hard in IMA, so that I could get my first choice. And I got it. I joined the Regiment of Artillery. The reason for joining

Artillery: to later join Air OP (now Army Aviation Corps) and fly. I took part in the 1971 war in the Western Sector with Pakistan. I was lucky to have survived. I was fortunate to read Maxim Gorky's quote when I was a teenager: "When work is a pleasure, life is joy. When work is a duty, life is slavery". Flying was not a job for me. It was a passion.

I finally got my chance to realise my dream when I started flying in Jan 1975 at EFS, Bidar on HT-2 aircraft. I then went on to the Helicopter Training School, Hakimpet and 14 years since the beginning of a dream to be a PILOT, I got my wings finally on 18th May 1976

During my career as a helicopter pilots I had many exciting experiences. I



That was when the dream started !!! Dreamt of being a PILOT.



Back to Macau in 2014, to fly a Corporate VIP AW 139

had a spacing cable failure, on a Chetak on 07 Feb, 1977 (my second birthday). I survived, thanks to my Flight Commander, who was also a flight instructor. Incidentally, there are only 3 survivors in the history of spacing cable failures. I had only 200 hours of total flight time and 20 hours on type. The survivors: my Flight Commander, an ATC officer and me. There were more such failures which were all fatal. Later in 1980, I became a flying instructor and logged many hours as a pilot. I quit the Army after 15.5 years in 1986 as a Major, in pursuit of my passion. I went to the US in Oct 1987, to get my FAA Pilot's license.

GOD has been kind to me. I cannot ask for more. It was a childhood dream come true. Nevertheless, it was not a bed of roses. It had its numerous and challenging, ups and downs, at times putting me on the edge of a cliff and breaking me down into pieces

I came back to India in Feb 1988 and joined Pawan Hans and flew offshore to the ONGC oil rigs in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Mumbai. I got the opportunity to work abroad in Feb 1995, for a 2 year contract job in Macau near Hong Kong and ended up working for 17 years. I flew scheduled helicopter passenger flights, between the two cities. Subsequently in 2012 - 14, I flew from Doha to the offshore oil rigs in the Persian Gulf:

And then it happened all of a sudden. This in spite of undergoing a medical check, every 6 months as a pilot, since 1995. I had a heart attack on 04 Jan 2015 (my third birthday). I





Proud to be a RIMCOLLIAN

have two stents in the Left Artery. I recalled the book "Reach for the SKY" while lying in the ICU, with oxygen tubes and blood flowing into my body. I told myself, if a person without legs can fly, why can't I, with a new and better functioning heart. I exercised, got back my energy and went back to the medical board. A rigorous and extensive check was carried out for a whole week, by an aviation medical

specialist. I passed all the checks and was back in the cockpit, barely 5 months later, on 12 Jun 2015.

“Matha Pitha Guru Deivam” is a very popular adage or phrase in Sanskrit language.

Translated word for word, it is, “Mother Father, Teacher, God”. The meaning of this adage is the greatest truth in my life, and is the order in which one offers reverence.

- My parents got me into the world on 17 Aug 1950.
- Col PC Reddy, my GURU gave me a second life on 07 Feb 1977, when he saved me during the spacing cable failure accident in the Alouette III (Chetak) we were flying.
- And finally Deivam, gave me the third lease of life, on 04 Jan 2015.

I'm truly blessed and fortunate to be alive. After 40+ years of flying, my last flight took place on 09 Jul 2015. I was given a water cannon salute, by the airport authorities in Macau, something I never expected or dreamt of. As I was passing under the water spray, I was overwhelmed with emotion and sentiments. Euphoria wasn't the only emotion flowing through me. I had tears in my eyes and my voice got choked.

MILESTONES

- 40 years plus of flying.
- 04 Nov, 2011: 20,000 flight hours logged.
- Mar 2012 Rotary Wing Society of India, New Delhi: Award for having flown more than 10,000 flight hours. I had already crossed the 20,000 mark on that day !!!!
- 09 Jul, 2015: 21,300 + hours of accident free flying.
- 32,000 + SAFE take offs and landings with thousands of precious souls on board.

GOD has been kind to me. I cannot ask for more. It was a childhood dream come true. Nevertheless, it was not a bed of roses. It had its numerous and challenging, ups and downs, at times putting me on the edge of a cliff and breaking me down into pieces. I would then put all the pieces together and take on the challenges. “When the going gets tough, the tough get going”. A sign which I saw, during my Commando Course in Mhow, in 1972 which I attended as a 2/Lt and is unforgettable. The courage and spirit to keep going and never give up: I learned in RIMC. All this helped me, In pursuit of a childhood dream. ■

GOLDEN RENDEZVOUS IN STOCKHOLM

— Wg Cdr **UNNI KARTHA** (Retd) (1962-66/Ranjit)

Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, constitutes 14 islands interconnected by ferries on the northern shores of Baltic Sea. Populated by Nordic peoples, the northernmost civilization at 60 degree North latitude, Sweden is perhaps the land of the midnight sun. Half the year the sun doesn't show up, and during the other half it doesn't set !! The cobblestone streets and ochre coloured buildings of 'Gamla Stan' of Stockholm, have 13th Century Storkyrkan Cathedral, Kungliga Slottet Palace and the famous Nobel Museum and foundation which dispenses the Nobel Prize.

This story is not about winning the Nobel prize, but about a Golden Rendezvous with Number 242, Davinder Singh Chauhan (Ranjit/1960-66) a most cheerful, mischievous, well-remembered maverick, who like Columbus decided to sail off on his own adventure while we were in NDA. For 51 years he went missing, till we caught up with him, out of all places, in Stockholm.

Rumcolian Colonels Gundu Rao, Lehl, Mamu Mangain and Wg Cdrs Mohan Chand, Mahavera and I, part of a group of ex NDAs (about 85 heads), now approaching 70s, recently went on a mid-term hike to Moscow, St Petersburg and



afterwards sailed on 'Princess Anastasia' to the Baltic states including Sweden. While searching for Carl Gustaf Folke Hubertus the King of Sweden in Kungliga Slottet Palace, we ran into Dopey Chauhan.

'Unni, I borrowed your white Terylene shirt in middle dorm and didn't return it', that was the first thing Dopey told me, as soon as we met. The clock went back 51 yrs !! 'Rumcolian' rascals don't introduce themselves, they just mention in passing what they borrowed and didn't return while in school; like I tell my friend Tota Jawaharlal that I borrowed his pickles and socks - I actually stole them !! Conversation then flows at rapid fire from

Maxim machine guns in the trenches of Somme and Flanders in First World War. Don't need ice breakers when Rumcolians meet. That is the vitamin in Scotch Eggs.

Dopey now runs a successful Gold jewellery business with a chain of shops all over Baltic, though the jewellery is made in his factory at the export zone in Noida. 'Come one, come all', Dopey said leading us to his showroom in Stockholm. 'Just pay 1/10th of listed price'. What more Rumcolian scotch egg induced camaraderie can one show than offer 90% discount for 18 carat gold jewelry in lieu of my ruddy Terylene shirt ?!!!

Afterwards Dopey took us to a fancy Chinese restaurant and paid for lunch with copious Danish beer, using Swedish Krona and Euro. If it weren't for 'demarche, tout de suite' by Princess Anastasia, that she would sail off without us, we may have stayed back as en-counter sales persons at Dopey's show room, because of the very pretty girls and Kohinoor jewels of Noida.

Cheers to Rumcolians worldwide, including the Prince of Wales. I think Charles needs to come back to Dun for a refresher course and a few front rolls!!! ■



TWO NATIONS, MANY CAREERS

— SARAVANA PAT BHAVA | 342/C, 124th RIMC Course

Last month as I was on stage receiving the honor for the 'Business Man of the Year-2018' from the Indo-US Chamber of Commerce, the feeling was almost surreal. Looking into a sea of faces behind the spotlight, I couldn't help asking myself- how did I get here. Was it fate, destiny, perseverance or just pig-headedness? I am still not sure! I will let you be the judge.

I grew up in a one-bedroom apartment in a family of five and I was the eldest of three brothers. My dad was a technician in a factory manufacturing Vijayanta tanks in Tamil Nadu at that time and my mom was a teacher. The day the news of my acceptance into RIMC was out, the entire family was a little surprised and overjoyed as I was the most academically challenged sibling in the family! Immediately preparation got underway for my 4-day train ride to Dehradun- a world apart from where I grew up - a sweltering suburb of then Madras. I could not speak a word of Hindi nor had I seen a real winter in my life.

Years later, as I was lying face down in a ditch by the side of the highway on a sultry august night with the cold muzzle of an AK-47 at the back on my neck held by some undesirable elements, a sense of déjà vu flooded me. I was a young Lieutenant in the Navy then. They say in moments like these your entire life flashes in front of you. That night along with rational fear, I had another familiar emotion, the one I used to have at one of those 'college in PT Kit' sessions in school and all the associated survival skills that came with it. It was the 'smart-acts' learned during those sessions that saved my life that day! (this is a story for another occasion)

First few years at school in RIMC were a blur for me. I really had a hard time adjusting to the weather, food, language and pretty much everything. I



Sarvava (centre) with the award

was a scrawny kid of 24kgs when I joined and was not good at any outdoor activities and was quickly falling behind in academics as well. By class 2A, I was written off as a lost cause. That's when I decided to make a change, By the time I passed out, I was a medalist in boxing, pole vault, swimming and an outstanding player in the school's basketball team (the kind who stand outside with rasna, but are still part of the college team!) It was during those days at school that I got the bug of constantly pushing myself outside of my comfort zone and I still do every day.

It was in NDA that I discovered another passion- Yachting. By the time I graduated from NDA, I had the honor of leading the NDA team in winning multiple national and international regattas. I continued this passion throughout my service till date, I have a boat now that I try to take out every weekend. I decided to join the Navy as, I reasoned, I could sail the world, scuba dive, and follow my dream of becoming a pilot. While in the Navy, I did exactly that and qualified as a Ship's Diver and then became a Fighter Pilot. After a few

years of flying Kirans, MIGs & Sea Harriers I got the opportunity to transition to maritime reconnaissance and flew Islanders and Dorniers for the Navy and the Coast guard. After 12 years of absolutely living the life to the fullest (or having no clue what I really wanted to do- a matter of perspective) in the Navy, I took a pre-mature retirement to join my wife and young daughter in the US.

Here I was, all over again 22 years later, feeling like the eleven-year-old boy in Dehradun, totally out of my element in the civvies street, but this time with a liberal dose of self-confidence. After completing my MBA and getting my Flying license in the US, one would assume things would take a benign turn. But instead I decided to start a chain of Indian themed Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) with absolutely no background in F&B and any business experience whatsoever. With no financial backing, I started where I could - a small food truck with a big business plan to prove the concept. In the next 6 years during the economic recession in the US, we managed to grow to 8 restaurants,

employed over 100 people and franchised the concept and exited to a private equity group. Simultaneously I also had the opportunity of founding a logistics & a real estate company which I actively manage today.

They say that ‘behind every problem, lies an opportunity’. This couldn’t have been truer about my next venture. As I sold my restaurant business and freed up a bunch of my time, I ended up doing most of the school pick-up and drop-off duties for my daughter. As some of you can empathize, this was a massive two-hour interruption to my rigorous Netflix routine that I had painstakingly build after my business exit. One day, as I was inching up in the car pick up lane at my daughter’s school, the teacher opened my car door and put a kid in my car and waved me off. As I was pulling away, I turned around and was staring at this strange white kid sitting in the back of my car! This was a serious breach of safety protocol. Where was my daughter? Sanity was restored pretty quickly and my daughter was home safe.

The more I analyzed the problem, I was convinced that technology could solve it. The business case was pretty clear to me, but I had to figure out the technological solution to go with it, if I were to turn this into an opportunity. My software skills that I acquired in RIMC and NDA were barely sufficient to pass



the grade, let alone put it to work to ensure safety of children at school. Here I was again pushing myself outside my comfort zone trying to build a hi-tech software company from scratch with no background in technology.

Fast forward three years from that day, we are today in 32 states in the US and 7 countries worldwide ensuring safety of children in hundreds of schools. Today we are the market leader in this space as the most comprehensive and cost effective school safety solution. We use artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to reduce traffic by linearly

sequencing cars in schools. We are in several partnerships with Departments of Transportation and city governments to mitigate their traffic bottlenecks. We proactively suggest carpooling options to parents and optimal times to leave home for their school pick-up routines. We also analyse open-sourced social media feeds using natural language processing and sentiment analysis to flag concerning behaviour for leadership interventions to enhance safety at schools. All this was possible due to the fantastic team we have on board.

Over the past few years, we have been humbled by the following recognitions:

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Indo-US Chamber Business Man of the Year-2018, Ford Smart City of Tomorrow Winner- 2019, Teacher’s choice award- 2018, TiE Hottest startup in Florida-2016, Grow Company of the Year-2018, TiE Startup of the Year-2017, Global startup of the year Finalist-2018, Software Industry’s CODIE Finalist-2018, Top Ten coolest places to Work- 2017&18.

Featured in: Tech Crunch, Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Popular Mechanics, Fast Company, Bloomberg, Tech and Learning, EdSurge, Fox News, ABC Action News, NBC, and NPR. ■



BUDDING SQUASH CHAMPIONS

— Sqn Ldr **KUMAR GAURAV**

Squash has been a traditional sport of RIMC in particular wherein we have had many national champions and Arjuna Awardees in the past. Consequently, the Squash courts in NDA have been by and large dominated by the Rimcollians and the preceding year has been no exception. The NDA Squash team has been recently making great strides in the Indian Squash Circuit. The 75th Senior National Squash Championship was held at New Delhi in December 2018. The NDA Squash Team comprising of six cadets of which five were Rimcollians performed very well during the championship. I was closely associated with the NDA Squash team during their rigorous training and a scheduled exposure at various levels as OIC NDA Squash Team. The credit goes to the hard work of all the boys and the regular coaching conducted by Ritwik Bhattacharya (a Rimcollian) at the coaching camps at the Start Academy, Kalote near Khopoli.

It was a proud moment when a NDA cadet, Cadet Vaibhav Chauhan (Oscar/138 Course, a Rimcollian) reached the Quarterfinals and finished 6th in Junior National Championships held during October 2017. Cadet Vaibhav has since reached minimum quarterfinals stage of almost all major National Level Junior Tournaments this year. He fought his heart out and qualified for the main draw in the Junior



Cadet Vaibhav Chauhan, a Rimcollian, at the Qatar Classic Squash Championship, 2018

National Squash Championship 2018 held at Jaipur before losing in a close match against Inderjit Singh, who was a part of the Indian squad selected for the Asian Junior Championship. Cadet Vaibhav had even defeated Sankalp Anand, who was a part of the Indian Team for the World Junior Championship as well as Asian Junior Championship. Vaibhav was fortunate to attend an international coaching camp at Aspire Academy, Qatar for 10 days prior to the Men's Nationals, which helped him tremendously to improve his game.

Cadet Ajay Singh (Alpha/139, a Rimcollian) has been a good find. He proved his mettle in the 75th Senior National Squash Championship 2018 held

at New Delhi from 09-16 December 2018, wherein he reached the qualifying finals in the Men's category. This puts him in the top 24 in India in the Men's Open category which is a phenomenal achievement given the fact that he is just 18 years old. Cadet Kunal Singh has been grinding it out since the past two years in the courts and finally results have started to swing in his favour in tournaments as well. He reached the qualifying semifinals at the recently held Senior National Squash Championship 2018 and finished in the top 40 in the country in the Men's Open category.

The NDA Cadets have taken part in 16 National level tournaments this year and performed exceptionally well. They have reached a stage wherein even before their commission, they are already giving a neck to neck fight to the Services team which consists of top ranked National level players. With the kind of efforts being put in by the cadets along with the excellent coaching, we are confident they will surely reach great heights in the near future. With the excellent coaching and exposure being given to these players by NDA, we should hope to see many Rimcollians in the top echelons on Squash in the coming years. ■



Rimcollian Mentoring: Tips from Ritwik Bhattacharya to the NDA team



Rimcollian Ajay Singh in action during the National Championship

RIMCOLLIANS AT NDA

— Col VIJAY GIDH (Retd)

<u>N.D.A. & N.A.(I) EXAMINATION 2018</u>			
S.NO.	RANK	ROLL NO	NAME
1	2	1410043	SHREYANSHU JHA
2	3	1400953	AARYAN DHAMA
3	4	1400838	ASEEM ANAND
4	5	1413658	HARSHVARDHAN SINGH
5	8	1408476	KANNAN VISHNU RAJ
6	20	1402235	PRAKHAR THAKUR
7	21	1406861	YENGKHOM SAKSESH SINGH
8	24	1413543	ARDAMAN SINGH LAMBA
9	26	1401505	GAURAV PRAKASH
10	28	1414298	PRIYANSHU SINHA
11	30	1411705	REHAN KHAN
12	33	1400770	KAPIL KISHAN PANDEY
13	41	1410672	AMAN KUMAR
14	55	1400557	LALRINDIKA
15	83	1412471	ASHUTOSH J MISHRA
16	93	1414688	PRANAV MITTAL
17	128	1409979	JITENDRA KUMAR VERMA
18	138	1406397	ABHISHEK CHAUHAN
19	193	1403441	HRITVICK PATIYAL
20	228	1408024	PRAKHAR TOMAR
21	249	1401529	VISHESH TRIPATHI

Some of us staying in Pune are fortunate to visit the NDA regularly. A trip to NDA brings back many pleasant memories of the three wonderful years we had spent at this hallowed institution, apart from meeting the young Rimcollian cadets

NDA MERIT LIST

A quick glance at the NDA Merit list for the term commencing January 2019 shows four Rimcollians in first five, five Rimcollians in first ten, and 16/21 in first 100. ■

there. Rimcollian cadets have always been doing well in NDA and have carved out a niche for themselves, thanks to their excellent grooming in RIMC.

During the Autumn Term, 2018, the young Rimcollians in NDA have done well and proud to earn the following colours:-

Blazer – Cdt Abhinaj Gautam in Riding & Polo

Blue – Cdt Liansanga in PT

Blue – Cdt Jagdeep Narayan in Riding

Blue – Cdt Hridul Rawat in Boxing

Half Blue – Cdt Chinmay Goyal in Sailing

Half Blue – SCC Vijay Chaudhary in X Country

Half Blue – Cdt Vijyant Rana in Sailing

Half Blue – Cdt Kushagra Mishra in Shooting

Half Blue – Cdt Shantanu Shukla in PT

Half Blue – Cdt Watandeep Singh Sidhu in PT

MERIT CARDS

● PT – Cadets Parth Gupta, Chetan Kumar and Prasad Jadhav

● Riding – Cadet Somay Badola

● X Country – Cadet Divyam Dwivedi

● Boxing – Cadets Sailo and Amul Rawat

15 Rimcollian cadets passed out during the 135th Passing Out Parade held on 30 November 2018; they consisted of 13 from the Army and 2 from the Air Force.

APPOINTMENTS

Cadet Mohit Bansal has been appointed ACA for the Spring Term, 2019 at NDA. In addition, there are a number of Battalion and Squadron appointments.

We wish the Rimcollian cadets in NDA all the best for 2019. May they bring further laurels to their Alma Mater!

THE RIMCOLLIANS AT IMA

— Col **VIVEK SHARMA**, Commandant RIMC

Squash has been a traditional sport of RIMC in particular wherein we have had many national champions and Arjuna Awardees in the past. Consequently, the Squash courts in NDA have been by and large dominated by the Rimcollians and the preceding year has been no exception. The NDA Squash team has been recently making great strides in the Indian Squash Circuit. The 75th Senior National Squash Championship was held at New Delhi in December 2018. The NDA Squash Team comprising of six cadets of which five were Rimcollians performed very well during the championship. I was closely associated with the NDA Squash team during their rigorous training and a scheduled exposure at various levels as OIC NDA Squash Team. The credit goes to the hard work of all the boys and the regular coaching conducted by Ritwik Bhattacharya (a Rimcollian) at the coaching camps at the Start Academy, Kalote near Khopoli.

The Rimcollians at IMA have performed exceeding well, and walked away with most of the honours and awards at the end of the term in December 2018. The top honours went to our boys including the Sword of Honour and President's Gold Medal (PGM) to Arjun Thakur and President's Silver Medal (PSM) to Gurvir Talwar. It has indeed been a very proud moment for our fraternity. A total of 15 boys have passed out with flying colours, virtually sweeping all awards



Colonel Vivek Sharma, Comdt RIMC With AUO Gurvir Talwar

AWARDS

- Blazer in PT** — GC Bhaskar Gogoi
- Blue in Boxing** — GC Arjun Thakur
- Merit Card in PT** — GC Pritesh Prasad
- Gold Medal in Russian OT** — GC Bhaskar Gogoi
- Para Medal** — GC Atul Tiwari
- Best in Tactics** — AUO Gurvir Talwar
- Para Medal & Best shot** - CQMS Atul Tiwari
- Best in PT, OT, OLQ & Most Motivated GC** — BCA Bhaskar Gogoi
- Best Sportsman** - ACA Arjun Thakur

ACHIEVEMENTS

Rimcollian ACA Arjun Thakur received the Infantry medal for being the No1 in order of merit joining Infantry. He has been allotted 6/8 GR. He has been awarded best sportsman and Blue in Boxing.

AUO Gurvir Talwar received the Infantry Medal for being second in overall

merit to join Infantry. He is getting commissioned into 6/11 GR and is also 2nd in overall merit. This time the superbloc constituted only 3 GCs and top 2 are Rimcollians. Gurvir's father is from my Paltan and he joined RIMC once I was in Military Training Directorate. It is note worthy to mention that Gurvir was not any appointment at NDA and while at IMA his coy officers and Battalion Commander swear by his Officer Like Qualities (OLQs). Long live RIMC!

Arms allotment at IMA

- Pritesh Prasad — Grenadiers
- Rupesh — 15 Guards
- Yashashee Raj — 9 Raj Rif
- Arjun Thakur — 6/8 GR
- Gurvir Talwar — 6/11 GR
- Michael — 15 Kumaon
- Arora — 1881 Lt Regt
- Bhaskar Gogoi — 19 Grenadiers
- Param — 8 Grenadiers
- Atul Tiwari — Arty
- Kalsotra — 11 Grenadiers
- Gitansh — 9 SIKHLI
- Kapil Baghel — 15 Mahar
- Neeraj — 268 Med Regt
- V Bardiol — 244 Med Regt

At RIMC, we have been regularly interacting with them, and formally invited them to visit the school a few times wherein we motivated them to do well in this crucial pre-commission training stage. I meet them before the important camps and events and in fact the last meeting was on 11 December 2018, a day prior to Choice of arms. They were also invited for the Commandant's dinner for the graduating course to serve as mutual inspiration. They also interact with the Masters and the boys, and this way a two-way process of interaction and feedback is sustained. Many of them also got their parents to the school during the December Passing out Parade, to pay respects and once again show to their parents where their journey begin. ■



The IMA Rimcollians at RIMC

GOOD BYE VISCOUNT SLIM II

Colonel John Douglas Slim, 2nd Viscount Slim OBE, DL, FRGS (20 July 1927 – 12 January 2019) was a British peer and soldier. He was one of the 92 hereditary peers in the House of Lords, elected to remain after the passing of the House of Lords Act 1999. In 1970, he succeeded to his father's title.

The son of Aileen Robertson and the 1st Viscount Slim, he was born in British India and educated at Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College in Dehra Dun, where he was in the Wavell Section.

In 1944, Slim joined the British Indian Army 6th Gurkha Rifles and was transferred to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1948. He entered the Special Air Service in 1952. From 1961, he was instructor at the Staff College, Camberley, and from 1964 at the Joint Services Staff College. In 1972, he retired from the armed forces at the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel with a later honorary promotion to Colonel. He was appointed OBE the following year.

Slim was chairman of Peek plc from 1976 to 1991, deputy chairman from 1991 to 1996, and eventually consultant from 1996 to 2003. He was further director of Trailfinders travel company and Trustee of the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL). From 1971



until his death he was president of the Burma Star Association and from 2000 president of the SAS Association. He was also Patron of Prospect Burma, a London-based charity that offers higher education scholarships to Burmese students as well as the Graham Layton Trust, a British charity which helps to raise money for eyecare in Pakistan.

Having been chairman in the past, he was vice-president of the Britain–Australia Society. From 1977 to 1996, he was vice-chairman of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce. In 1983, Slim was made a Fellow of the

Royal Geographical Society. Between 1995 and 1996, he was also Master of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers. He served as an honorary chairman of The OSS Society.

He was married to cordon bleu chef Elisabeth Spinney from 1958 until her death in 2018. They had two sons, including his successor Mark William Rawdon Slim, and one daughter.

On his death, The Times, London wrote: As a teenager John Slim spent his school holidays with his father. This might not seem so unusual, until it is noted that his father was the wartime commander of the 14th Army and that the “holidays” were taken near the front lines in India and Burma. There the 16-year-old witnessed the gruelling fighting endured by what became known as the “forgotten army”, as well as its ultimate victory over the Japanese.

Unsurprisingly, as soon as he was old enough, the gung-ho young Slim joined his father's regiment, the 6th Gurkha Rifles. Cutting a swashbuckling figure, square of jaw and bushy of eyebrow, he served as a supernumerary aide-de-camp to his father's friend Major-General “Punch” Cowan in the final months of the war. ■



RIP AIR MARSHAL TJ MASTER

It was with profound sorrow that the Rimcollian fraternity learnt about the passing away of Air Marshal Master. The Air Marshal was in Chicago and breathed his last just before 4 PM on Saturday evening, 29 September 2018. Teshter Jall Master P/1054-58, later Air Marshal Tester, was in Pratap Section. He could not get into NDA because of his height being inadequate for Air Force. He joined Wadia College in Pune, then got into the Air Force Flying College Jodhpur to catch up with the very course, 21st NDA and then became a fighter pilot. He was a very good boxer at school. He retired as AOC-in-C Training Command at Bangalore, and settled there. I just about managed to meet a couple of weeks ago in Command Hospital, and that was a kind of good bye. He was very cheerful and that is how I will remember him. May his soul rest in peace. -- Gp Capt AG Bewoor ■



Imourn the loss of a Rimcollian, an outstanding air warrior, my personal guide and mentor. During the 1971 war, Teshter Sir was one amongst the few outstanding pilots in TCDTS (Tactics & Combat Development & Training Squadron), called upon to nocturnally harass PAF's strongest held and defended air bases, considered by PAF as invulnerable fortresses. TCDTS conducted single aircraft, ultra-low level, high speed, deep penetration strikes, using Mig-21 and SU-7 aircraft, to bomb and strafe PAF bases at Chaklala, Chander, Sargodha, Kirana Hills, Risalewala, and Shorkot, launching from Amritsar and Adampur, safely returning to their home base at Ambala. In post war analysis, the bewildered PAF historians candidly admitted their angst. That these incredible, repetitious, dark night, clandestine deep penetration

strikes shattered their morale. They erroneously concluded that these marauders could have achieved such strikes, with aircraft (Mig-21/Su-7) which had no night navigation and night attack capability, this could have been done only with the help of Russian AWAC support. There was no AWAC, as Teshter Sir confided, there was simply a Mig-21 doing routine CAP at 10 km over Adampur, called 'Sparrow', to relay messages from our radar at Amritsar, when our aircraft were chased on return. As Teshter Sir said with his characteristic humour, all that he had with him to do these impossible missions, were Eye Balls Mk-1, very sensitive back side (seat of the pants), and valour induced by Rimcollian scotch eggs, Wow wow I say, with utmost admiration, outstanding RIMC testosterone. In post 71 war years, when TCDTS morphed into TACDE (Tactics and Combat

Development Establishment), the citadel, ultimate professional training establishment of fighter pilots, Teshter Sir was one of its founding fathers.

As a young officer, Teshter Sir participated in strafing Aijal and adjoining Mizo hills helping to quell Mizo insurgency. He fought both the 1965 and 1971 wars on the western front. As he grew older, he held several Command & Staff appointments; CO of prestigious No 1 Sqn, Operations in Charge SWAC during Kargil Crisis, Inspector General DASI, Def Attaché in US & Canada. After 40 yrs of honourable and exciting service, Teshter Sir retired as C-in-C Training Command on 31 Dec 2002 and settled in Bangalore. In recognition of his meritorious service, he was awarded AVSM and PVSM. In retirement too, Teshter Sir was a hyper active veteran. May Teshter Sir RIP. ■

—Wg Cdr UNNI KARTHA

CAMPHOR CONVERSATION 2019

Camphor series is an initiatives of the alumni of RIMC to come out with book of short stories every year. This initiative is now seven years old and a large number of old boys of have contributed to it. Veteran journalist SIDHARTH MISHRA (Ranjit Section 1979-83) coordinates this project and has turned many a rapier bearers to the wielders of the quill. The recent conversation between the contributors to this series would give one an idea about the passion Rimcollians have for their school.

SIDHARTH MISHRA: Happy to share that today 'Epistle -- Letters As Epochal Messengers' was digitally allotted an ISBN number. Our earlier ISBN numbers had been courtesy manual allotment. In digital allocation, the checks on publication and content is carried out online and then a number allotted after a few clarifications here and there. This process has managed to weed out corruption in the ISBN number allotment process.

Sharing with you all the cover of the book. This time too we have 15 contributors including two debutantes -- Mr LN Thakur and Sqn Ldr Vinoth Vanya. While Mr Thakur is making debut at the age of 88, Vinoth is about six decades younger to him. The foreword this time by the inimitable Unni Kartha Sir, in addition to his story about the exchange letters with his father. All stories are exceptional by exceptionally gifted writers -- Ujjal Dasgupta Sir, Jasbir Sir, Gidh sir, Jacob and Joseph sirs, Suyash, Karan Bamba, Sanjay Kannothe, Vikram Kadian, Shailender Arya, Dhritishman and Vinoth. What is being missed is Brig Charlie Thapa's write-up. The book is hardbound and cover by my better half Dipti -- the letter box under a camphor tree with the pine trees in the backdrop. The book has 140 pages and is hardbound with jacket and cover priced at Rs 600/-. It will be available to the Rimcollians at school for Rs 350/- of which Rs 50/- goes to the school coffers. The publishers would also sell at the same retail rate, which would include postage. Those of you desirous of placing bulk orders could write to the publisher, who is copied in the mail, for bigger discount.

I must thank each one of you for having taken out time to pen for this series, which sooner or later would be recognised as a significant piece of literature evolving out of the passion of a group of alumni for their school.

(I have taken the liberty of reproducing the conversation on the Camphor group as it makes an interesting read)

COLONEL SHAILENDRA ARYA: Many thanks for your email. It is indeed great news. Another one in the series - looking forward to reading it.

BRIGADIER SUYASH SHARMA: Great. Yes Charlie Thapa sir's contribution will be missed. Looking fwd to it eagerly.

Brigadier Ujjal Dasgupta: Great show about the digital ISBN number. The cover is good indeed! Compliments to your better half!

WG CDR UNNI KARTHA: Hahahahahahaha Sid, I have no literary, sporting or academic skills, I am just a joker/comedian by birth; the essence of what I tried to say in the story I sent to you.



And here you are, making me a word smith; turning my fame as a 'duffer' upside down.

RCS (Mr RC Singhal, our late vice-principal) must be front rolling in Valhalla, it must have been a punishment for him to make me civilised like another class mate 'Tomato Bag' (Brig Rimo Karbek), the first monkey 'King' to escape from the jungles of NEFA in 1962. Tomato has more exciting tales to tell, but the buggger doesn't speak or write more than few words even now (like bird, tree and scotch eggs, taught to him by RCS) and his longest sentence to MO Mathai, envoy of Nehru who imprisoned him in RIMC was, 'Eye want go home NOW' !!!!!!! Several decades later, Jasbir as MO-1, mighty 'Sardare Hind' in Yarmy HQ, ordered Col 'Tomato' the Roman Centurion 'Pontius Bless Us All' (God save me, I am going to get punched

in the nose), to take a boat across Pongong Tso lake to find what Chinese were doing there. Tomato, with all RIMC bluster, swam across single handed and ordered the Chinese to line up, do General Salute, and vacate NEFA, an imperious order since he is the real tribal 'King of Ziro'. Tomato Bag after retirement hides either in Dwaraka or Passighat, still muttering 'bird, tree, scotch eggs, Eye want go home NOW'. He is my real 'King and Singh' of NEFA. What a privilege it was to have such illustrious classmates, including 'Chiku' Ashwani, Dir CBI and the Governor of Nagaland/Mizoram, from the batch of 1962.

You made my day Sid, I hope my silly story will focus the light on each of my illustrious and very accomplished classmates, heroes of my story, rather than on silly me.

Thank you dear Sid.

Order 25 books for me please, besides the free copies you promised. I will present one each to the very bad battery gang of 'Hyder-Bad', Ever Reddy/Never Reddy types, whose sum total social vocabulary is similar, 'birds of Welhams, difference between tree and woods, and of course the scotch eggs with testosterone.

BRIGADIER MOTHI GEORGE JACOB: Thanks for all the push and pull you put behind the scene Sid to let this roll out. Every great project requires a Kick-ass guy and I should say that there wasn't any doubt about the final outcome. There is much that lay below the fallen leaves in our Alma Mater and they are all waiting to be swept up the road. I think we as an institution shall grow richer with all that.

Of course Thapa sir will be missed and as time goes by there will be more but the roots are strong enough to handle all that. Thanks for the efforts and I cannot quite wait for the release.

But I have a word for Unni Sir! You have a style that can set fire to the wettest of woods and I cannot wait to read your piece as well as the foreword. And sir, you cannot hide your writing genius behind the "lungi" of modesty. You know better than anyone that a lungi can never cover the essence of a man and I am glad that your day is made. I must admit that many of my days are made with your writings and the blog of yours. You have a great fan following and so celebrate sir.

And I am not forgetting all the others who have put in their soul to make this one come alive.

And hey guys, share the address among each other.... We could meet when we are around in the vicinity.

WG CDR UNNI KARTHA: Aaahhhhhhh, (it is a sigh of pleasure). In the winter chill, aches and pains of my 'osteoporosised' bones vanish with either a hug, compliment or kick in my ass. Thank you MGJ, for keeping the doctors away!!!!!!

Yes, Sid is persuasive and persistent, and when he orders I can't resist the temptation to squeeze another silly story of incredulous youth. No more squeezing, the toothpaste tube is 'Khali'. Time to hand over my baton, and I am so happy that there are so many of you with greater talent to carry the baton, tell more vibrant and stimulating stories, of life times and mischief of younger generations with more wit and wisdom. I too look forward to the stories from the rest, Ujjal Sir to the youngest.

BRIGADIER UJJAL DASGUPTA: Dear Unni, Now I think senility is really hitting you! I can't think of any other explanation for why you go and make a ridiculous statement about hanging up your spurs. Your writing is superlative, and your wit keeps us all young. Even a mail from you is a gem. What on earth would we do without you? "We" means the countless numbers of fan following you have. So perish the thought, spit on your hands, drag the blank sheet and keep them coming.

WG CDR UNNI KARTHA: AYE AYE SIR!!!!

COMMODORE NAJ JOSEPH: Great Sidharth, I am sure we all look forward to Camphor 7. Unni sir, like Mothi sir said you are the inspiration for many of us to write but your style is unique and I can assure you that you have a huge fan following. I don't know whether you recall but we had a chat before I became a regular in the camphor series. We have grown and the number of contributors too, and Thapa sir will always be missed. One can only wish that the tribe grows from strength to strength.

And we can actually continue well beyond our envisaged 10 by 2022. More power to the pen and the sword.

For camphor books contact CSD Canteen at RIMC or write to the publisher at sriavcreations@hotmail.com



LAST POST

RANK & NAME	Yr at RIMC	Section	Date
BRIG CS THAPA	1964-69	PRA	11 Mar 18
LT GEN PARMINDER SINGH JAGGI, AVSM	1971-76	RAN	08 Apr 18
CDR PARTHO BIKRAM CHOWDHURI, SC, NM	1955-60	PRA	14 Apr 18
MR R. BALAKRISHNA MENON	1956-60	RAN	23 Apr 18
MR SANTOKH SINGH CHOPRA	1936-42	ROB	03 May 18
LT COL KASHMIR CHAND	1937-43	KIT	24 May 18
COL ANIL KANT SHARMA	1968-73	SHI	27 May 18
COL NK JHA	1971-76	CHA	04 Aug 18
LT COL MUKUL DOBHAL	1968-72	RAN	15 Sep 18
AIR MSHL TJ MASTER, PVSM, AVSM, ADC	1954-58	PRA	29 Sep 18
CDR BIMAL RAI BHATIA	1966-69	RAN	09 Nov 18





School's former Vice Principal Mr V G Nene (left), approaching 90, but all set for Mumbai Marathon with his brother