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Editorial

The last quarter saw a slew of activities at the IMF and the effervescent Council Members left no stone unturned for their successful completion.

Remembrance Day was observed on 12 Nov 17 at the Bund Garden Memorial Pune. The event drove home the point that the sacrifices of thousands of Merchant seamen during WW I and II were not forgotten by their countrymen.

The Society of Indian Marine Artists (SIMA) conducted a painting competition for the Junior artists on 26 Nov 17 at Empress Garden Pune. The response by youngsters was overwhelming.

The Maritime Research Centre of IMF conducted an Underwater Domain Awareness Workshop at Southern Naval Command Kochi on 13 Dec 17. The workshop attended by the FOC-in-C, served to emphasise to the stakeholders the relevance of the concept of UDA and appreciate the requirement of urgent measures at a national level to address its multiple aspects in the IOR.

The 24th Anniversary of IMF was celebrated with gaiety and fervor on 17 Dec 17 at Hotel Central Park Pune. We were fortunate to have the august presence of several luminaries from different fields to share our joy of success in the last 24 years. On that occasion we also honored the winners of an Essay Competition conducted by IMF on Climate Change.

We are proud to announce that IMF participated actively in the International Coastal Clean-up 2017. Our Coordinators in North and South India enlisted the support of about 12000 volunteers and helped clear over 68 tons of trash from beaches and river banks.

On 10 Jan 2018, we were delighted to host a lunch at RBYC Mumbai to meet all well wishers and supporters of IMF. We had a golden opportunity to meet eminent stalwarts from I.N., Merchant Marine, Industry and others.

The ordeal of the 35 crew of MV Seaman Guard Ohio, including six former British soldiers, appears to be over as Madurai Bench of Madras High court has finally acquitted them of the charges of possession of weapons under the Arms Act. Coming in the wake of the *Enrica Lexie* case involving the Italian Marines, India law enforcement agencies have once again failed to make a legal case for offences believed to have been committed in the waters under Indian jurisdiction.

In this issue we are pleased to give the reader interesting articles about nerve-racking night flying operations at sea, commissioning of the latest Indian Submarine, latest report from INSV Tarini, epic sea battles in the Pacific and much more.

NOTICE BOARD

- 05 Feb 18 - SIMA's Annual Seascapes Exhibition at Balgandharva Kala Dalan, Pune
March 18 - IMF's Maritime Research Centre seminar at Pune

Letters to Editor

Sir,

The 91st Seagull has arrived with very great pleasure on my part: thank you very much indeed. I have read a number of articles and thoroughly enjoyed reading - (my trip to India). I am very impressed by the article on the circumnavigation of INSV Tarini with her ladies' crew. Is that a very new arrangement? It sounds very exciting, especially for the women involved. There seems to be many areas where you are involved and causes which you take up. It makes very good reading and I am full of admiration. It is lovely to read about things past, USS Laffey and the article by Capt. Dixit on the Berlin Wall experience.

Pamela Gueritz,

Salisbury, England

Sir,

My thoughts on sharing with you a new year wish is attached in a short narrative. It is my version of wishing you and all at IMF good tidings for 2018. God bless.

As we approach the new year, let us remember family and friends from the past to the present. Robert Burns, 1759 the expressive words of 'Auld lang syne', will be remembered forever because his song rings out on new year's eve without fail. Since 'Auld lang syne' means 'for old times sake.' It is a song or verse full of sentiment: 'Should old acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind?

Should old acquaintance be forgot and 'auld lang syne' The theme of these words is universal and impacted the national anthems of Japan and Maldives. So as the time draws closer to mid night give a thought to all the lovely people who have been a part of your life. Auld lang syne will bring you closer to them, wherever they may be. As one philosopher wrote, 'the hand which holds the pen moves across the page, and having thus

writ, moves on...' The page for 2017 has been written. A new page, in 2018, is about to begin. It will write your hopes and dreams and all you aspire for. It will happen as you guide those those dreams. Good luck for a fabulous time ahead.

Happy New Year.

Deepak Rikhye

Ambala, Haryana

Sir,

I hope all is well.

Thought you might like to see a note of an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons tabled on 19 December:

“NATIONAL SIKH WAR MEMORIAL. That this House appreciates the extraordinary bravery and sacrifices of Sikh soldiers in service of Great Britain, including during both World Wars, and supports the erection of a permanent national monument in a prime central London location to commemorate and highlight these contributions; notes that for over a decade there has been a demand from various quarters for the installation of such a national monument; welcomes the recent statement by the Mayor of London, who said it is only right that these brave individuals should have a memorial in our capital city; further notes that more than 83,000 turbaned Sikh soldiers laid down their lives and more than 100,000 were injured during the World Wars; and calls on the Government to actively support a memorial dedicated to those who made or were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of our country.”

Total number of signatures: 244

Here's hoping all is well,

Paul Ridgway

Stamford, Great Britain

An Evening to Remember

By

Cmde Ajay Chitnis (Retd)

8th September 1982, around 1730 hrs, Kamov- 25, IN574 got airborne from the Guided Missile Destroyer, INS *Rajput*, operating about 200 miles South West of Mumbai in the Arabian Sea.

On board were Lt Cdr Ajay Chitnis, Captain of the Aircraft and Pilot in Command, Lt Cdr Pratap Mehta, Tactical Coordinator (TACCO) and Navigation Instructor, and Lt SS Rathore, Under Trainee Observer. Mission – to Search, Locate, Track and Simulate Destruction of the 'Red' Submarine, known to be operating in the area, based on an input from the Long-Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft. The aim of the exercise was to prevent the 'Red' Submarine from getting close to the 'Blue' Fleet.

Soon after take-off, the helicopter was directed towards the last reported position of the

knew that the helicopter had 'pinged' her and she had been detected. Evasive action had been initiated by the submarine and it was a challenge for the helicopter crew to keep monitoring her movements. Contact was intermittently lost, but regained after re-positioning, and so the game of cat-and-mouse continued for about an hour and a half. The sun was about to set, and it was incumbent upon the helicopter to break hover. Having done this, and thereby having lost the use of the Sonar, the crew switched to the 'Sonobuoy' mode. A pattern of sonobuoys were laid to ensure that the submarine could be tracked continuously. It is to the credit of the tactical team on board that they were able to maintain contact with the submarine and thereby tracking her movements by laying successive sonobuoy barriers. This went on for about an hour and the tactical team was chattering away gleefully, buoyed by the success they had achieved.



Kamov- 25

submarine, and started the search pattern based on the calculations carried out by the TACCO. The search had been meticulously planned and so it was during the third 'Dunk', that the excited voice shouting 'CONTACT' was heard from the Sonar Operator. Obviously, the submarine too

Suddenly, the Pilot noticed that the needle on the Port Engine Oil Pressure Gauge dropped to zero, indicating that there was a serious malfunction in the engine lubrication system of the Port Engine. He asked the tactical team to terminate the exercise as he turned the helicopter towards the ship which was about 30 km away. The Engine has four parameters to indicate its health, one of which is the oil pressure; the other three are – Oil Temperature, RPM and Exhaust Gas Temperature. Careful monitoring of the instruments indicated that the other three parameters were normal, and it could be a false indication. However, in aviation, no chances are ever taken, and a PAN, PAN, PAN, call made to the ship indicating that the helicopter had an emergency and was returning for a priority landing. This caused a flutter amongst all the ships present and all unnecessary



The author (centre) and Pratap Mehta (R), being welcomed on board by Capt Lakhkar, CO INS Rajput

communications were stopped to keep the frequency free for the helicopter.

While approaching the ship and hoping that it was after all a false indication, a sudden whining sound was heard – something that the crew had never heard before. The Port Engine Had Seized! The helicopter had just been deprived of 50% of its power, a very serious situation indeed. Promptly a MAY DAY, MAY DAY, MAY DAY, call was made and the mother ship informed of the situation. Here it is necessary to digress a bit; while undergoing training in Russia, landing the helicopter on one engine was practiced only at the base, and never on board a ship, not even by day! When asked for this emergency to be simulated the Russians simply said that it had never been attempted, and such a case warranted 'Ditching' the helicopter, by landing it on the sea. Easier said than done, but that was the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure), they told us.

So here we were, flying at about 200 mts altitude on a pitch-dark night on one engine. The SOP said 'Ditch', but that option was not exercised. The Pilot decided to land the helicopter on the 10m X 10m deck of INS Rajput, and conveyed this to the Captain of the Ship – an extremely bold man, who trusted his aircrew wholeheartedly. He just asked once if there was anything he could do to make it easier, to which

the pilot requested to provide for maximum wind on deck possible. He promptly increased the ship's speed to 24 kts, and started monitoring the helicopter's movements personally. On board, the team of Chitnis and Mehta, who had been trained together since 1980, steeled itself to grapple with the situation. Checklists, though known by heart by both were read out and complied with, the failed engine was switched off to prevent a fire, after double checking that the correct engine was being switched off, and an approach commenced towards the ship, now moving at 24 kts.

The Pilot had gone into the visual mode keeping a constant eye on the deck, while the TACCO, now in the Navigator mode kept reading out the height, Speed and distance to go, ensuring that the helicopter was on the glide path at all times. Communications were mostly by instinct rather than verbal enabling the pilot to concentrate totally on the landing. It was well known to all that there was only one attempt possible, as the Kamov 25 does not have the ability to either hover or climb on one engine. It was a do-or-die situation literally!

What followed was a perfect landing in the centre of the circle marked on the deck, making it the first time a Kamov 25 helicopter had been brought down on a Kashin Class Destroyer, and that too on a pitch-dark night. Courage, Skill and Teamwork had resulted in saving not only the helicopter but probably three lives as well, and also importantly, the ability to diagnose the cause of the engine failure and a design defect in the helicopter.

To welcome the crew back on board was the Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral KK Nayyar, and the Ship's Commanding Officer, Captain SW Lakhkar. A fairy tale ending no doubt, but could have also gone the other way. Truly an evening to remember, even 35 years after the incident.

Commodore Ajay H. Chitnis (Retd) is Vice President IMF, Mumbai Branch.

From Jane's Defence Weekly

Iran claims to be building region's largest warship.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) unveiled a large model of a training ship called Khalij Fars (Persian Gulf) on 29 November, saying it will be the largest warship in west Asia. The Iranian media reported that the vessel will be 135 m long and 16 m wide, have a displacement of 6,500 tonnes, a maximum speed of 25 kts, a range of 8,000 n miles (14,816 km), and be able to train 230 students at a time.

The model showed it armed with four anti-ship missiles and fitted with a helicopter deck. The Tasnim news agency reported that the vessel has been under construction since 2012. The model was one of several achievements that were announced on Navy Day. Others included an unmanned maritime vehicle called the Damavand , indigenously produced fuel for torpedoes, and a digital torpedo guidance system. A poster seen in Iranian TV coverage indicated that a prototype of the Damavand has been tested at sea.

China targets export market. Buoyed by recent successes with the Pakistan and Thai navies, Chinese naval shipbuilder China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation has recently unveiled a slew of new submarine concepts targeted at the export market. New export concepts include 200-, 600-, and 1,100-tonne diesel-electric submarines.

With decades of experience from submarine design and construction for the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), Chinese naval developers – led by the state-owned China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) – are looking to expand their presence on the world

stage with indigenous export submarine designs having secured recent successes in Pakistan and Thailand.

Pakistan is acquiring eight S20 diesel-electric submarines based on the Yuan-class (Type 039A-series) design, with the first four boats to be built in China and deliveries commencing to the Pakistani Navy (PN) from 2022. The remainder will be built in Pakistan by the Karachi Shipbuilding and Engineering Works (KSEW).

Prince of Wales floats out ahead of schedule. 22 Dec2017

The UK Royal Navy's second Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier was officially launched on 21 December, achieving another milestone for the construction programme. The future HMS Prince of Wales , originally planned to launch in 2018, was floated out ahead of schedule during a ceremony held at BAE Systems' Rosyth facility in Scotland, officials said. Under current plans, sea trials for the 65,000-tonne ship are expected to start in 2019.

Pakistan to restart Naval shipyard project.

Pakistan is preparing to restart a long-delayed programme to develop a naval shipyard in Gwadar in the far west of the country, Pakistan Navy (PN) Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi announced on 28 December. In comments published by the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Adm Abbasi said at a PN-industry conference in Karachi that the project will commence shortly and be completed in three to five years.

Pakistan conducts firing of cruise missile from Azmat-class boat

The Pakistan Navy has launched what appears to

be a shipborne variant of an indigenously developed cruise missile from its latest Azmat-class patrol craft, PNS Himmat (1027). The weapon, which has been referred to by the service's chief of naval staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, as the 'Harbah' naval cruise missile, was fired on 3 January in the North Arabian Sea.

The missile was said to have hit its intended target accurately, but no further details were available, including its distance from Himmat . Adm Zafar and other senior naval officers witnessed the weapon's launch from onboard the service's Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate, PNS Alamgir .

China's AG600 amphibious aircraft makes maiden flight

China's indigenously built AG600 amphibian has made its maiden flight. The four-turboprop aircraft took off on 24 December 2017 from Jinwan Airport in Zhuhai, near Macau, and flew for about an hour, according to Chinese state media. First rolled out by manufacturer Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) in July 2017 at a production facility in Zhuhai, the AG600 is slightly larger than the previous 'flying boat' built in China, the Harbin SH-5.

The AG600 is likely to be used for both civilian and military applications. According to Xinhua, its role will include maritime rescue, aerial firefighting, and marine monitoring. In the latter role it may be used by the Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) or the China Coastguard. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) may also use the aircraft for surveillance and logistics support, particularly in the South China Sea, where it could provide the capability to transport personnel and supplies quickly and at short notice.

Indonesia commissions second Martadinata-class frigate. The Indonesian Navy has inducted its second Martadinata (Sigma 10514) class guided-missile frigate. The vessel, which has

been named I Gusti Ngurah Rai with pennant number 332, was commissioned on 10 January at Denpasar, Bali, in a ceremony officiated by Admiral Ade Supandi. The 105 m vessel is the last of two frigates jointly constructed by Indonesian state-owned shipbuilder PT PAL and Damen. It was laid down in December 2014 and launched at PT PAL's facilities in Surabaya on 29 September 2016.

Myanmar commissions new OPV and landing craft.

The Myanmar Navy commissioned seven new vessels into service on 24 December 2017, the service's 70th anniversary. The vessels included an offshore patrol vessel (OPV), named UMS Inlay (54), two 56 m landing craft utility (LCU) vessels (1614 and 1615), as well as four 29 m landing craft tank (LCT) vessels (1713–1716). Inlay was built at Thanlyin Naval Dockyard near Yangon with the help of technical assistance and equipment provided by Singapore-based companies. Launched by late November 2015, Inlay had been very largely completed by April 2017. The OPV is approximately 81 m long with a beam of about 12.5 m and is understood to displace at least 1,500 tons. It is powered by two diesel engines driving two propellers. The OPV is capable of operating a helicopter from its approximately 17.5 m-long flight deck and has a single hangar..

TKMS begins work on Singapore's third and fourth Type 218SG submarines. German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) has begun work on the Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN's) third and fourth Type 218SG air-independent propulsion (AIP)-equipped submarines.

A steel-cutting ceremony for the boats was held on 12 January in Germany, Singapore's Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) announced three days after.

Compiled by Cdr Mukund Yeolekar, Editor Seagull.

A Trip to Hong Kong

By
Capt AC Dixit

Mahabaleshwar, a hill resort about 120 km from Pune has been a regular annual picnic spot for IMF council members for many years. This year we decided to widen our horizon and decided on a trip to Hong Kong.

Our team comprised Cmde Rajan Vir (Retd) President IMF, Capt Anand Dixit, Vice President IMF, Mrs Nalini Kunte, Secretary IMF and her son Anil, Mrs Qaneez Sukhrani, a noted civic activist and Media PR of IMF.

Although both CmdeVir and I had visited Hong Kong several times in the past during our service in the navy or the merchant marine, we were now curious to see the new Hong Kong under Chinese rule and revive some of the old memories. An unstated agenda was also to meet Capt Harry Banga, a Hong Kong based shipping magnate and Life Patron of IMF, to thank him for his generous contribution to the IMF over a period of time.

As we arrived in Hong Kong on the morning of



Capt Harry Banga and Mrs Indra Banga

26th October 2017, the first impression of the island city confirmed what we had been reading about it- Hong Kong has indeed changed. As a British colony it began to flourish as a centre for international trade, banking and shipping. Today it is one of the world's most significant financial centres, consistently ranking as the world's most



Standing (L to R) Ms Qaneez Sukhrani, Mrs Channa, Mrs Mangala Dixit, Mrs Indra Banga, Mrs Nalini Kunte. Seated (L to R) Capt Yash Channa, Cmde R Vir, Capt Harry Banga, Capt AC Dixit, Mr Atul Vir, Mr Anil Kunte

competitive and free economic business place. Although shipping and shipping-related businesses continue to be in the forefront of the economic activities, Hong Kong has grown in stature to be an international financial centre. A special mention must be made of the efficient public transport system of Hong Kong, that includes buses, trams, ferry boats, cable cars and

Hong Kong has grown in stature to be an international financial centre. A special mention must be made of the efficient public transport system of Hong Kong, that includes buses, trams, ferry boats, cable cars and the underground MTR (Mass Transit Railway) system.

the underground MTR (Mass Transit Railway) system, well supported by taxis which are always at hand.

The high point of our stay in Hong Kong was the dinner hosted by Capt Harry Banga and Mrs Indra Banga for our group at Peking Garden Restaurant. Also present were Capt H Channa, an Associate of Capt Banga, and Mrs Channa. Atul Vir, IMF's Honoray Correspondent in Houston was also an invitee at the dinner. Atul was in Hong

Kong on his way back to the U.S. after visiting China.

Capt Banga was a gracious host and had gone to a lot of trouble to select the venue and the menu. We discovered that he was also an excellent conversationalist as he regaled us not only with light anecdotes but also with a highly informative talk about Hong Kong and China.

Cmdr Vir presented a salver and a shawl to Capt and Mrs Banga as a token of IMF's gratitude and respect. Unfortunately due to shortage of time we did not have the opportunity to return his hospitality.

Our time in Hong Kong flew very quickly. Then it was one day's stay in Macau where one could see a fascinating co-existence of Chinese and Portuguese cultures. The Historic Centre of Macau which preserves Portuguese architecture is now a UNESCO heritage site.

The next day, on the 30th October, we bid goodbye to Macau and Hong Kong as we boarded the turbo-jet ferry that would take us from Macau to Hong Kong International airport, thus ending our six-day whirl-wind excursion with many happy memories to cherish.

Capt AC Dixit is Vice President of IMF.



A View of Hong Kong from Star Ferry Terminal Kowloon

Art Evening with Mr Prateek Tandon

By
Dr.(Cdr) Arnab Das

Promoting Seascapes has been a major part of the IMF agenda to realize its vision of spreading awareness about the oceans. The Society for Indian Marine Artists (SIMA) has been doing its bit for a while now and its contribution in promoting marine art has been equally noteworthy. Mr Prateek Tandon is a very active and young member of SIMA and has been engaged in creation and promotion of marine art for some time. He is a



Mr Prateek Tandon

motivation for the IMF hosting an Art Evening on 04 Dec 2017 at the Boat Club.

The event commenced with the customary welcome address by President IMF Cmde Rajan Vir. In his capacity as the head of SIMA, he gave a brief on the activities and new initiatives. The recently conducted SIMA Junior Art Competition at the Empress Garden, found special mention as it managed very good participation from the young children. The

membership for Junior SIMA that was initiated at the competition found 20 members on the opening day.

The event found participation from friends and family members of Mr. Prateek Tandon. IMF council members and SIMA members attended in good number. The technology students and

Mr. Prateek Tandon is a very active and young member of SIMA and has been engaged in creation and promotion of marine art for some time. He is a passionate artist with spiritual moorings. In his own admission, “art is the expression of one's soul and it means connecting

passionate artist with spiritual moorings. In his own admission, “art is the expression of one's soul and it means connecting with God”. He has multiple art events to his credit having worked with prominent artists of Pune. A traveller by nature, and he does draw inspiration from his travel experiences.

Mr. Prateek Tandon had recently visited the famous Art Institute of Chicago. Founded in 1879 and located in Chicago's Grant Park, it happens to be one of the oldest and largest art museums in the United States. His love of art and passion to bring home the global art scene to fellow Puneites was the



The Red Armchair by Pablo Picasso in 1931 – Oil and Ripolin on Wooden Panel.



**Self Portrait by Vincent Van Gogh
in 1887 – Oil on Artist's Board**

senior researchers, undergoing internship at the Maritime Research Centre (MRC) also decided to indulge in the art evening. Among the guests who attended, Cmde Rajan Vir made special mention of Prateek's parents, Mrs. Farida Punawala and Pune's well known Architect and Artist Mr. Iqbal Chaney.

Mr. Prateek Tandon made a very passionate and emotional presentation of the art museum and the exhibits he witnessed. He made a strong pitch for art being a significant source of happiness for him and people at large. For the uninitiated and others sitting in the audience, it was a very pleasant and informative experience. In his own admission, it is impossible to first look at the whole museum in reasonable time and definitely not possible to present to the audience. He still did a good job of giving a sense of the collection and the manner in which they have been presented at the museum. Famous paintings, famous artists, collectors delight and the list are endless. The grandeur and the finesse of the entire institute were mentioned repeatedly.

***Dr (Cdr) Arnab Das is Director Maritime
Research Centre***



A Sunday on La Grande Jatte by Georges Seurat in 1884 – Oil on Canvas

Navy Climbing to Global 'Front Rank'

Zhang Zhihao

Chinese military ship-building technology will leap to the front rank globally in the near future, a senior ship designer said on Tuesday.

Ships, such as aircraft carriers, are 'instruments of national significance' said Wu Xiaoguang, chief designer of China's first domestic aircraft carrier. The country has achieved great progress since 2012, he said. On April 26, China launched its first domestically developed aircraft carrier in Dalian, Liaoning province, according to the Ministry of National Defense. The new carrier – the largest and most sophisticated vessel China has ever built – is undergoing a thorough trial run at sea. Its name will be provided once it is commissioned.

An aircraft carrier is the crown jewel of military hardware. It is extremely complex and must be designed with great attention to detail.

Everything on the new carrier- every steel plate, the electronics, equipment, aircraft, missiles and mines- was produced on our own.

It follows the CNS Liaoning, the country's first carrier, which was refitted from a partially built Soviet ship. "An aircraft carrier is the crown jewel of military hardware. It is extremely complex and must be designed with great attention to detail," Wu told reporters on the side-lines of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. "And everything on the new carrier- every steel plate, the electronics, equipment, aircraft, missiles and mines- was produced on our own."

With a displacement of 50,000 tons, the carrier is classed as midsize. A large one typically has a displacement of at least 80,000 tons. On June 28, China launched its Type 055 class guided missile destroyer in Shanghai. The 10,000 metric ton

warship is equipped with advanced air defense, anti-missile, anti-ship and anti- submarine weapons, and it is regarded as one of the China's most powerful surface combat vessels, the ministry said. "China is fully capable of producing midsize and large aircraft carriers and large destroyers," Wu said. China depends heavily on the sea, with more than 80% of its exports and imports ferried by water, he said. At the same time, it is the world's largest trading nation, with massive migration of workers and movement of tourists. As the Belt and Road Initiative progresses, China's overseas investments and number of workers will increase dramatically, and "they will need protection from our naval forces," Wu added.

In recent years, China has been turning out a steady stream of new vessels because "many of our ships are outdated or have exceeded their service life", he said. Wu said his teams – whose members' average age is 37 years – will continue to contribute to China's growing naval capabilities. "In the near future, I am confident that our shipbuilding technology will leap to the world's front rank," he said. Maj Gen Ma Gang, a professor at the People's Liberation Army National Defense University, said a strong naval force is hallmark of a strong nation, but China will not use its Navy to impose Chinese influence or pursue hegemony.

The Navy is committed to protecting China's interests and national sovereignty," Gen Gang said. "At the same time, a strong Navy can shoulder more escort and peace keeping duties and contribute more to regional and world peace."

Courtesy : China Daily

Banishing Coal From Sewri

By
VAdm IC Rao (Retd)



**The author (L) with Shekhar Gupta (C),
Chief Editor Indian Express**

Meera Sanyal was standing for the Lok Sabha elections in 2014. Whilst touring her constituency we passed by Sewri and saw huge mounds of coal stacked in various plots of land.

She recognised that the polluting effects of coal dust on the city, and its effects on the lungs of citizens, could be an agenda point in her manifesto. I ascertained that this coal was imported from Indonesia and was being transported by rail to Bhusaval and Nashik.

With some experience of filing RTI (Right to Information Act, 2005) applications and Public Interest Litigations(PIL), I began the first of many RTI applications on 24 Apr 2014 to find out how much coal had been imported in the last two years. In the response I received on 16th May we were informed that 1.8 million tons had been imported in 2013-14 and the maximum quantity stored was 203,090 tons on 9 Mar 14.

We observed that outdated methods were being used for handling this coal and that it caused what was called 'fugitive dust'. We decided to go public on this and briefed journalists and activists about

this catastrophe in the making. We showed the spontaneous combustion taking place. This resulted in the high profile visit of Shekhar Gupta, then the Chief Editor of the Indian Express. We took a photograph to highlight the visit and for future publicity. He wrote about the hazards of this coal being stacked in the city. Other journalists also came and wrote about this.

It was not until counting for the elections was over on 7 May 14 that we could revert to this issue. We obtained substantial information from MbPT, including copies of correspondence, names of importers, storage and destination, etc. Most useful were copies of complaints they had received from citizens objecting to the coal dust pollution.

We found that a pattern had emerged. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) wrote to the MbPT to enforce dust control measures. They in turn wrote to contractors to spray water, cover trucks with tarpaulin, and take rudimentary measures to reduce pollution. The contractors made a show of compliance but soon things would revert to what they were. The MPCB then laid down even more stringent conditions, only on paper, and the pattern was repeated. Even the local Koli Samaj filed a complaint with the police against the truckers and followed this up with a Rasta Roko. It was ironical that the MbPT was aware of modern methods available to handle coal as just 10 kms away at the Tata Electric Power Station which was using modern dustless coal handling methods, but MbPT, or the stevedores or the coal handling companies were unwilling to incur the capital cost of buying this equipment.

When a coal fire occurred at Reay Road and this was highlighted in the press, and with a photograph that I had managed to take, the MbPT

shrugged it away as a minor incident.

In July 2014 the Government constituted a Port Land Development Committee under Mrs Rani Jadhav, a former Chairman of MbPT. This was welcomed by all. They gave a deadline of only 2 weeks, by 28th July, for citizens to make suggestions.

We had our task cut out to mobilize activists and were lucky to be able to team up with the Urban Vision' and 'Studiopod', through Mr Rajiv Thakker of Studio X, one of the Global Centres of the Graduate School of Planning and Preservation of Columbia University, New York. Thereafter a hackathon was organized where I suggested that 1000 acres of PortLands along the Eastern front stretching from Wadala to Colaba be reimaged. We formulated a name for our group-A PortLands Initiative- APLI Mumbai, and produced a report to revamp the Port areas. This we submitted to the Rani Jadhav Committee. The report she submitted to the Government in Nov 2014 recommended, inter alia, the cessation of coal handling in Sewri. We were delighted, but regrettably nothing came of this despite pleas, RTI's etc. We were informed that Mr Nitin Gadkari, the Minister of Shipping was considering the report. Over the next one year, it became obvious that the Government wanted the report to be buried. The rumour was that the Government wanted the report changed but the members would not oblige. However, in the meantime, the Ministry officials assured us that dirty cargo handling would be stopped, but yet no orders were issued.

So Meera Sanyal and I decided to file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Bombay High Court, in Sep 2014. The Chief Justice rightly referred our case to the MPCB. The legal Dept of MPCB looked grave when we met them but the



Coal handling with excavators creating dust at Haji Bunder.

management was unfazed. We got a hearing, after much lobbying, in Feb 15. Finally, a site visit was organized in Apr 2015. This was attended by representatives from the MPCB, the MbPT, and a vociferous representative from the stevedores, Mercator Shipping. The effects of the mountains of coal stacks in terms of coal dust affecting everything in the vicinity was recorded with vivid photographs. We also visited places in the vicinity affected by this coal dust. The blackened fan in the hostel room of a cadet of Marine Engineering Research Institute at Hajee Bunder was the clincher.

A report on the visit prepared by us was submitted to Mr Mirashe, the technical head of MPCB, but there was no response. Thereafter we tried to involve bureaucrats with little success. Eventually, I with a small delegation from Koli Samaj managed to meet the Environment Minister, Mr Ramdas Kadam, but apart from some publicity nothing tangible was achieved.

Soon after, a reporter Ms Anahita Mukherjee wrote extensively about this issue in the Times of India. We introduced her to all concerned and she got enough material for a series of 10 articles. We like to believe that this relentless series of articles over six months had an effect on the Mumbai Port Trust officers, if not the top management who are often prisoners of the system.

This change in the attitude of officers in the middle management resulted in the Board of

Trustees of the MbPT approving an order that coal handling would be discontinued from 31 Oct 2015. APLI welcomed this, but the Minister of Environment, of Government of Maharashtra, Mr Ramdas Kadam, of all people, sought to pressurize the MbPT to continue with coal handling. He orchestrated a report showing that all dust control measures had been implemented. By this time the dust control measures stipulated by MPCB had become impractical if not ludicrous. For example, one condition was that MbPT must build sheds to store the coal, which rose 15m high, and was spread over 19 acres. The mountains of coal of over 1 lakh tons had to be seen to be believed, but nobody in authority visited the plots only 6km from the High Court, 4km from the Port Trust Chairman's office and 6km from Sion, the HQ of MPCB.

APLI Mumbai resorted to RTI's, messages on social media, picketing by Koli Samaj and a scathing notice by a lawyer, Mr Kaushik. We also met the Chief Secretary who assured us that the Principal Secretary would stand firm, against political pressure. We held many meetings with the Environment Secretary and the Minister but eventually coal handling was given a back handed extension with even more ludicrous conditions like spraying water over the mountains of coal and 'not causing nuisance to others'. This came as a shock to us and all the activists who had labored hard and long to oppose such a move.

We resorted to a second PIL petition by Mr. Kaushik, on the same issue citing illegalities, like approving coal handling retrospectively! Our target was the MPCB but finally under pressure in court the MbPT gave a commitment to stop coal handling by 31 Oct 15 and to clear the coal stacked there. But the matter was not over as Mercator Shipping claimed they were being discriminated against. Meanwhile MbPT confirmed that coal handling had been stopped and out of 93000 tons stacked at Haji Bunder

57000 tons had been cleared. Mercator then filed further petitions and brought legal pressure which sought to allow them to continue to use Haji Bunder to offload coal, but these were not heard. More petitions and **meetings with Government, MPCB and MbPT followed with the Environment Secretary standing firm led to an assurance of measures being instituted to ensure cleaner handling, but an extension was still granted for this till 31st October 2017!** This again came as a shock to us, but the saving grace was that the conditions remained totally impractical.

As a diversion, we promoted a view that coal could be handled at Dharamtar where there was no major population centre within a radius of over 5km.

However success was soon to be achieved as factors such as a 'Maritime India Summit' on 14th April 2016, which the Prime Minister inaugurated, issued a catalogue mentioning 'Clean Projects in Mumbai Port are incompatible with coal handling'. Also Mr Sanjay Bhatia, the new Chairman of MbPT, in a keynote address at a conference organized by IMC and APLI, stated that **a consultant would be appointed to prepare a master plan covering the area from Sewri to Reay Road. This was followed by tenders from MbPT for master planning of the designated area, including Haji Bunder. The net result of this was that coal handling could not be restarted.** We immediately proposed the establishment of an Ecopark from where one could view the thousands of flamingos that winter along the Sewri mudbanks.

Though the battle seems won there is no intention on our part to rest on our laurels as we have tasted victory in the past only to find it snatched away again. We and the public must remain ever vigilant.

Edited by Commander Sati Taneja (Retd) who is a Trustee and former Vice President of The IMF

Remembrance Day 2017

By
Capt AC Dixit

Remembrance Day, also known as Remembrance Sunday, marks the Armistice signed on 11th November 1918 at 1100 hours between Germany and the Allies to end WW I and commemorates the sacrifice of those who laid down their lives in the war.



Remembrance Day was observed in Pune under the aegis of the IMF at the Seamen's War Memorial, Bund Garden, on Sunday 12th November 2017. The Chief Guest was Capt Kiran M Kamat, Chairman & MD of Link Shipping and Management System Ltd., Mumbai. Cmde Ajay Chitnis (Retd) as the Master of Ceremonies, conducted the proceedings of the day.

The solemn ceremony began with rendering of invocation by Dr Saroj Bande followed by the Naval Prayer recited by Cmde Ajay Chitnis. Cmde Ajay Chitnis welcomed the guests and briefly explained the significance of the event.

Cmde R Vir, President IMF, in his welcome address highlighted the role of merchant seamen in times of war and peace and explained the significance of Remembrance Day with special reference to the 7955 Indian seamen who sacrificed their lives in the two world wars.

The Chief Guest was felicitated with a bouquet and a shawl by Capt Ravi Hajarnavis, Senior Vice President of IMF. Capt Kiran Kamat, in his address touched upon some of the problems faced by the Indian shipping industry. He stressed that Indian shipping must increase its tonnage in order to carry its fair share of cargo and give career

opportunities to the aspiring young people. He concluded by suggesting that the Indian Maritime Foundation could play an important role in taking up these issues with the government.

The next item was wreath laying, beginning with the Chief Guest Capt

Kiran M Kamat, followed by Captain Sujit Chowdhuri, Senior-most Merchant Marine Officer in Pune on behalf of the Indian Merchant Marine, Cmde CL Saini on behalf of the Indian Navy, Lt Col M Ghughe on behalf of the Indian Army, Mr M.S. Bahanwal, Manager, Kirkee War Cemetery on behalf of - Commonwealth War Graves Commission London, Capt SS Gokhale on behalf of Company on Master Mariners of India, Dr BK Saxena, Principal Tolani Maritime Institute, Cdr Mohan Philip- on behalf of the Navy Foundation Pune Chapter, Sub Lt (SCC) Yogesh Botre on behalf of Sea Cadet Corps and finally Commodore Rajan Vir, on behalf of the Indian Maritime Foundation.

The Wreath Laying was followed by sounding of the Alert and Last Post by the Buglers deputed by the Indian Army, followed by observance of one-minute silence and the Rouse. Cmde Ajay Chitnis in his concluding address gave an interesting explanation of the significance of the Last Post.

After that, the Sea Cadet Corps Band played some popular martial tunes, which won the appreciation of all present. The function came to an end with singing the National Anthem.

Capt AC Dixit is Vice President of IMF

'Night Witches' (WW II Russian Female Daredevil Fighter Pilots & Navigators)

By
Cmde George McKee, USN (Retd),

They flew under the cover of darkness in bare-bones plywood biplanes. They braved bullets and frostbite in the air, while battling skepticism and sexual harassment on the ground. They were feared and hated so much by the Nazis that

any German airman who downed one was automatically awarded the prestigious Iron Cross medal. All told, the pioneering all-female 588th Night Bomber Regiment dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs on Nazi targets. And in doing so, they became a crucial Soviet asset in winning World War II. The Germans nicknamed them the Nachthexen, or "night witches," because the whooshing noise their wooden planes made resembled that of a sweeping broom. "This sound was the only warning the Germans had. The planes were too small to show up on radar... [or] on infrared locators," said Steve Prowse, author of the screenplay *The Night Witches*, a nonfiction account of the little-known female squadron. "They never used radios, so radio locators couldn't pick them up either. They were basically ghosts." Using female bombardiers wasn't a first choice. While women had been previously barred from combat, the pressure of an encroaching enemy gave Soviet leaders a reason to rethink the policy. Adolf Hitler had launched Operation Barbarossa, his massive invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941. By the fall the Germans were pressing on Moscow, Leningrad was under siege and the Red Army was struggling. The Soviets were desperate. The 588th's first mission, on June 28, 1942, took aim-successfully-at the headquarters of the invading Nazi forces.



Polikarpov Po-2 Biplane

A Woman Leads the Charge. The squadron was the brainchild of Marina Raskova, known as the "Soviet Amelia Earhart" - famous not only as the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force but also for her many long-distance flight records.

Seeing an opportunity, Raskova petitioned Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin to let her form an all-female fighting squadron.

On October 8, 1941, Stalin gave orders to deploy three all-female air force units. The women would not only fly missions and drop bombs, they would return fire, making the Soviet Union the first nation to officially allow women to engage in combat. Previously, women could help transfer planes and ammunition, after which the men took over. Raskova quickly started to fill out her teams. From more than 2,000 applications, she selected around 400 women for each of the three units. Most were students, ranging in age from 17 to 26. Those selected moved to Engels, a small town north of Stalingrad, to begin training at the Engels School of Aviation. They underwent a highly compressed education-expected to learn in a few months what it took most soldiers several years to grasp. Each recruit had to train and perform as pilots, navigators, maintenance and ground crew. Beyond their steep learning curve, the women faced skepticism from some of the male military personnel who believed they added no value to the combat effort. Raskova did her best to prepare her women for these attitudes, but they still faced sexual harassment, long nights and grueling conditions. "The men didn't like the

'little girls' going to the front line. It was a man's thing." Prowse told HISTORY.

Making Do With Hand-Me-Downs and Relics.

The military, unprepared for women pilots, offered them meager resources. Flyers received hand-me-down uniforms (from male soldiers), including oversized boots. "They had to tear up their bedding and stuff them in their boots to get them to fit," said Prowse. Their equipment wasn't much better. **The military provided them with outdated Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes, 1920s crop-dusters that had been used as training vehicles. These light two-seater, open cockpit planes were never meant for combat. "It was like a coffin with wings,"** said Prowse. Made out of plywood with canvas pulled over, the aircraft offered virtually no protection from the elements. Flying at night, pilots endured freezing temperatures, wind and frostbite. In the harsh Soviet winters, the planes became so cold, just touching them would rip off bare skin. Due to both the planes' limited weight capacity and the military's limited funds, the pilots also lacked other "luxury" items their male counterparts enjoyed. Instead of parachutes (which were too heavy to carry), radar, guns and radios, they were forced to use more rudimentary tools such as rulers, stopwatches, flashlights, pencils, maps and compasses. There was some upside to the older aircraft. Their maximum speed was slower than the stall speed of the Nazi planes, which meant these wooden planes, ironically, could maneuver faster than the enemy, making them hard to target. They also could easily take off and land from most locations. The downside? When coming under enemy fire, pilots had to duck by sending their planes into dives (almost none of the planes carried defense ammunition). If they happened to be hit by tracer bullets, which carry a pyrotechnic charge, their wooden planes would burst into flames.

Long Nights, Stealth Tactics. The Polikarpovs could only carry two bombs at a time, one under

each wing. In order to make meaningful dents in the German front lines, the regiment sent out up to 40 two-person crews a night. Each would execute between eight and 18 missions a night, flying back to re-arm between runs. The weight of the bombs forced them to fly at lower altitudes, making them a much easier target-hence their night-only missions. The planes, each with a pilot upfront and a navigator in back, traveled in packs: The first planes would go in as bait, attracting German spotlights, which provided much needed illumination. These planes, which rarely had ammunition to defend themselves, would release a flare to light up the intended target. The last plane would idle its engines and glide in darkness to the bombing area. It was this "stealth mode" that created their signature witch's broom sound.

Disbanded and Overlooked. Their last flight took place on May 4, 1945-when the Night Witches flew within 60 kilometers (approx.37 miles) of Berlin. Three days later, Germany officially surrendered. Altogether these daredevil heroines flew more than 30,000 missions in total, or about 800 per pilot and navigator. They lost a total of 30 pilots, and 24 of the flyers were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Raskova, the mother of the movement, died on January 4, 1943, when she was finally sent to the front line-her plane never made it. She was given the very first state funeral of World War II and her ashes were buried in the Kremlin. Despite being the most highly decorated unit in the Soviet Air Force during the war, the Night Witches regiment was disbanded six months after the end of World War II. And when it came to the big victory-day parade in Moscow, they weren't included-because, it was decided, their planes were too slow.

<http://www.history.com/news/meet-the-night-witches-the-daring-female-pilots-who-bombed-nazisby-night>

Capt Shanti Sethi-First USN Indo-American Captain

by

Capt Sunand Kanetkar, IN (Retd)

U.S. Navy Captain Shanti Sethi, an Indo-American, was appointed Commander, Task Group Integrated Air and Missile Defense, and Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet's Task Force 64, and became the U.S. 6th Fleet Director of Tomahawk Strike Operations, in March 2017. She recently took part in 'FORMIDABLE SHIELD 17' (Sep 24 to Oct 18) at Hebrides Range off the Western Isles of Scotland, which is a U.S. 6th Fleet-led, joint NATO live fire integrated air missile defence (IAMD) exercise



Capt Shanti Sethi

involving eight nations, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom and the U.S. Its purpose is to improve allied interoperability in an IAMD environment, utilizing NATO command and control reporting structures, so that all nations have the ability to act and operate from the same hymn sheet. This is aimed at making the decision line as short as possible, with room for error minimal. This was the first event in a planned recurring biennial exercise. "The exercise scenarios are designed to test our limits and give us a unique opportunity to truly practice how we would fight together as an alliance," Capt. Shanti Sethi said in a news release.

She is only the 12th female Commander of a US warship (USS Decatur-DDG73), and the first Indo-American woman to do so. While in command, the ship paid a visit to Chennai in Mar 2011, during a seven month deployment, to the Pacific and the Arabian Sea. Captain Shanti Sethi is a native of Reno, Nevada, and was raised in the Bay Area of California. She graduated from Norwich University in 1993 with a degree in International Affairs.

Captain Sethi also holds Master's degrees in International Policy and Practice from The George Washington University and in National Security Strategy from the National War College. Her shore appointments include Executive Assistant to the Commandant of the United States Naval Academy, Resource Officer on the Chief of Naval Operations Staff (Surface Warfare Directorate), and the Navy Office of Legislative Affairs. Most recently, she served on the staff of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, in the J-5 (Plans and Policies) Directorate and as Executive Assistant to the Director for Operations (J-3).

Capt Sethi's decorations and awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Navy Commendation Medal (four awards), the Navy Achievement Medal, and various unit and campaign awards.

Once when asked if she ever imagined she would Command a US warship, she is reported as having said "...I didn't. Around my sixth year in the Navy I was getting ready to move from sea duty to shore duty, and I ended up interviewing for [civilian] jobs because I didn't think I was going to stay in..... when it came down to actually getting a job offer and looking at what I did for the Navy—you know, 'I drive warships' versus 'I do marketing for Kellogg,'—the Navy was just the cooler job".

Capt Shanti Sethi, we are proud of you and SEAGULL salutes you for your achievements and dedication.

Capt Sunand Kanetkar is Associate Editor SeaGull



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In Pursuit of Excellence & Quality in Shipbuilding

Junior SIMA Annual Competition

By
Cmde R Vir (Retd)



Painting Demo by Ms Hina Bhat

Again this year in November, the Society of Indian Marine Artists' (SIMA) get together in junior category was held in Empress Garden.

85 students in three age groups from different schools in Pune took part in it. Many of them displayed the seascapes they had brought along done at home earlier, and some of these were very well painted. Best paintings received an award. Registration desk was manned by Shobhna Mirchandani, Jayanti Shetty and Julie Mathew, under the overall supervision of Anuradha Thakur, the Junior SIMA Secretary.

The program began with a demo on how to paint a seascape by one of our senior artists, Hina Bhat. The demo was watched attentively by the students to absorb the finer techniques of a seascape.

This was followed by the main event of the day, the on- the- spot seascape painting competition. The participants were divided into three groups age-wise and given the subjects to paint, in the time allotted of one hour. They all worked

diligently and produced some fine work, under the watchful eye of Prateek Tandon .

While the paintings were being assessed by the three judges, Nalini Kunte, Jayanti Shetty and Shraddha, Hoshnar and I conducted the maritime quiz comprising ten questions. The quiz generated an exciting response from the students, as it does every year. Puncham was our 'official' photographer of the day who took great pictures..

It was time for prize distribution and the handing out of certificates by the President of SIMA, and finally, the much awaited snacks and



Prize Winning Painting

refreshments for all the participants, and tea for the parents. This ended another much looked forward to day in SIMA's calendar, and it was enjoyed by all in the pleasant ambience of the Empress Garden. We hope the students, and their parents, went home with a little bit of sea-mindedness injected in them.

Cmde R Vir is President IMF and head of SIMA

Kalvari To Kalvari – 50 Years and Counting

By

Cmde Anil Jai Singh, IN (Retd)

On 14 December 2017, the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi commissioned INS Kalvari, the first of six Scorpene class submarines being built at Mumbai under the Project 75 programme. This marked an important milestone in the navy's undersea warfare construct and also the nation's endeavour to 'Make in India'.

The Indian Navy's submarine arm came into being with the commissioning of INS Kalvari, a Soviet built Foxtrot class submarine on 08 December 1967 in cold and distant Riga (in the erstwhile USSR). On 14 December 2017, the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi commissioned the second INS Kalvari, the first of six Scorpene class submarines being built at Mumbai under the Project 75 programme and a worthy successor to take forward the legacy of her illustrious predecessor. This marked an important milestone in the navy's undersea warfare construct and also the nation's endeavour to 'Make in India'.

This Kalvari to Kalvari saga, in a sense, also encapsulates the incredible 50 year journey of the submarine arm which has come a long way and has much to be proud of. It is a saga of hard work, commitment, perseverance and dedication; this was duly recognised with the award of the President's Colour by the Supreme Commander on 08 December 2017 at an impressive ceremony in Visakhapatnam on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Arm.

From its humble beginnings in 1967 and its baptism by fire in the conflict with Pakistan in December 1971, the arm has emerged as the cutting edge of the navy's frontline capability across the entire spectrum of



The New Kalvari

conflict – strategic, operational and tactical. This has been in no small measure due to the strong foundations laid by the pioneers, many of whom were present at the Golden Jubilee celebrations justifiably proud of the strides made and whose contribution was duly recognised by the present generation.

In the emerging maritime security scenario prevailing in the region, a robust undersea warfare capability with submarines as the principal component is an imperative. India aspires to become a major power in a predominantly maritime oriented Indo-Pacific and therefore requires a balanced multi-dimensional blue water capability. With the distinct focus on undersea warfare in the region, the lack of a balanced submarine force development constitutes a strategic vulnerability that needs to be addressed urgently. The Indian Navy presently has a force level of 16 submarines. These include both,



Award of President's colours

nuclear powered and conventional diesel-electric submarines. A brief overview of the Indian Navy's current and future status is highlighted below

As a nuclear weapon power with 'No First Use' as the cornerstone of our nuclear doctrine, a credible second strike capability is essential. The most effective platform for this is the submarine. Presently India has one nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine, INS Arihant (SSBN). This submarine has been built indigenously and is a great testament to India's industrial prowess. We are now the sixth nation in an exclusive club comprising the Big Five (US, UK, Russia, France and China) with this capability. A force level of five SSBNs is planned to ensure continuous-at-sea deterrence.

Nuclear powered attack submarines (SSN) armed with conventional cruise missiles can shape the maritime battlespace in an operational theatre of conflict. Their ability to do high speeds and lethal weaponry are not only a great asset to a Carrier Task Force but their ability to strike land targets from stand-off ranges at sea with precision guided weapons can also influence the final outcome in a littoral battlespace. The



**Commissioning of INS Kalvari by
PM Shri Narendra Modi**

spectacular success of the Tomahawk missiles

launched from SSNs off Iraq and more recently Libya effectively neutralised the opposition. India has one such submarine, INS Chakra. It is Akula class submarine leased from Russia for 10 years in 2012. Media reports indicate that the lease of a second Akula class SSN is also under discussion. In the meantime the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has cleared a programme for the indigenous construction of six SSNs and work on their design has begun. Hopefully the first indigenous SSN will be in service before the end of the next decade.

The conventional submarine (SSK) fleet comprises nine Sindhughosh class submarines (Russian Kilo class), four Shishumar class submarines (German Type 209) and the latest, INS Kalvari. Of the 13 older submarines 11 are more than 25 years old and the newest 17 years old. While these boats are in fine operational fettle with periodic modernisation, their vintage is a matter of concern since the follow-on programmes are not moving at the desired pace. While all six P75 submarines will enter service by 2021-22, the follow-on P75(I) programme has been beset by delays at the planning stage itself and even an optimistic guesstimate would indicate that the first of this programme will enter service only towards the end of the next decade. A further programme of six conventional submarines has been approved by the Cabinet but would be a long time in coming.

In 1999, the CCS had approved a 30 year plan for indigenous construction of conventional submarines to address the sporadic induction programme of submarines. However that plan itself is running about a decade behind schedule. It was therefore heartening to hear the Defence Minister allude to the delays in submarine acquisition at the Kalvari commissioning ceremony and her intent to address this. This is vital not only for India's military self-reliance but also for India's national security.

***Cmde Anil Jai Singh is Vice President IMF
Delhi Branch***

Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) Workshop

by Maritime Research Centre (MRC) at Kochi

Report by Dr (Cdr) Arnab Das

The Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) concept propagated by the Maritime Research Centre (MRC) at the Indian Maritime Foundation, Pune is steadily gaining ground among stakeholders.

After a very positive interaction with the Blue Economy entities and the Marine Conservation communities, MRC did a one day workshop organized by the Southern Naval Command at



Dr Arnab Das with the Delegates

Kochi. The stakeholders do recognize the relevance of the concept and appreciate the requirement of urgent measures at a national level to address the multiple aspects of UDA in the IOR. The safe, secure and sustainable growth model for India in the 21st century needs to be backed by very sound understanding of the geo-political and geo-strategic dynamics in the IOR. The UDA framework can potentially address all those dynamics and formulate a comprehensive way ahead with participation from all the stakeholders.

The Indian Navy by way of its national mandate and proactive positioning in the IOR or probably globally today does become a very critical stakeholder in the entire UDA matrix. The author of the only national maritime strategy document, the Indian Navy does present itself as a proactive force with very clear vision and well endowed leadership. The training command at Kochi took

the lead and organized a full day UDA workshop coordinated by the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) School on the 13 Dec 2017. The seed for the event was sown during the visit of the FOC-in-C Vice Admiral A R Karve, to Pune for the IMF Annual Seminar on 10 Aug 2017. The C-in-C was kind to interact with MRC Adviser (Strategy) Vice Admiral Suresh Bangara (Retd) and Director MRC, Dr(Cdr) Arnab Das and take a briefing on the MRC activities and the UDA concept.

The workshop was planned in three sessions. The first part was the general awareness for a big audience comprising of the broad naval strategic and tactical community and also the representatives for supporting institutes like DRDO (NPOL & NSTL), NTRO and others. The young trainee officers from CLABS to Long Course officers were all present in big numbers along with instructors, directors, commanding officers of ships and establishments and flag officers. The presentations were made by Vice Admiral SCS Bangara (Retd) on the Indian



FOC-in-C VAdm A R Karve addressing the Audience

Navy's historical journey on UDA and its relevance in the present context, followed by Dr(Cdr) Arnab Das on the broad UDA concept and its formulation. Rear Admiral S Y



Discussions in Progress

Shrikhande (Retd), MRC Expert on Security gave a very comprehensive road map for Underwater Domain Dominance (UDD) with the present day geo-strategic challenges for Indian Navy in the IOR. The presentation was organized at the Sagarika Auditorium with a full house audience. Capt Sasi Kumar, Officer-in-Charge ASW School gave the welcome address. Vice Admiral A R Karve gave the key note address and set the tone for the day's proceedings, reflecting the seriousness of the Indian Navy for taking forward the UDA concept.

The second session was aimed at interaction and three breakaway groups were organized. The first group lead by Vice Admiral SCS Bangara discussed strategy and policy issues to include UDA in the future naval planning. Cmde G Prakash, CO INS Venduruthy was the deputy Chair for the session with participants from IHQ MoD (Navy), Command HQs and other supporting organizations. The second group was lead by Rear Admiral S Y Shrikhande (Retd) to discuss the operational and tactical issues towards UDD. The deputy chair for the group was Cmde NAI Joseph, Director Maritime Warfare Centre (Kochi). The third group dealt with Technology and Innovation and was coordinated by Dr(Cdr) Arnab Das. The group was chaired by Rear Admiral M A Hampiholi, Flag Officer Sea Training and the deputy chair was Cmde Shree Kumar Nair, CSO(Tech) at SNC. Each of the breakaway groups had close to 25 participants.

The third session was the concluding session to draw way ahead. Vice Admiral A R Karve was back again to attend the session and each of the deputy chairs for the first two groups and the chair for the third group summed up their sessions. Vice Admiral SCS Bangara gave his concluding remarks and thanked the C-in-C and the entire team for putting together such a comprehensive workshop. ASW School has been tasked to take forward the UDA dialogue in the Navy. The Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) being coordinated by the ND School.

The three resource persons from MRC, arrived Kochi on 12 Dec and the Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral R J Nadkarni, hosted a dinner reception at the Ivory Room of the sprawling Southern Command Officer's Mess. Directors and Commanding Officers of various establishments at the SNC were also present. Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, CSO(Trg) at SNC was the guiding mentor for planning and executing the event. Capt Sasi Kumar, O I/C ASW School and his team coordinated the entire event and ensured every action with meticulous planning and professional touch. Vice Admiral A R Karve



Section of Audience

hosted a dinner for the MRC speakers on 13 Dec at the Navy House and Flag Officers and their Ladies of SNC were graciously present at the occasion.

Dr Arnab Das is Director Maritime Research Centre

Remembrance Day 2017 at Kranji War Memorial, Singapore

Lt Cdr (SCC) Joshua Aston

Remembrance Sunday (also known as the Poppy Day) is commemorated annually on the Sunday closest to November 11. It is a day to honor Commonwealth soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The Remembrance Day 2017 was observed at the Kranji War Memorial in Singapore on 12th November 2017. The programme commenced from 0630 hrs onwards and witnessed the participation of several school children, boy scouts, girl guides, members of the Singapore Armed Force (SAF), veterans, diplomats, heads of religious communities and civilians.

Kranji War Memorial is located at 9 Woodlands Road, in Kranji in northern Singapore. It is dedicated to the men and women who fought and died during the World War II while defending Singapore and Malaya against the invasion of Japanese forces. These men and women belonged to the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, India, Malaya, the Netherlands and New Zealand. This War Memorial comprises the War Graves, the Memorial Walls, the State Cemetery, and the Military Graves.



Kranji Memorial is dedicated to the men and women who fought and died during the World War II while defending Singapore and Malaya against the invasion of Japanese forces. These men and women belonged to the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, India, Malaya, the Netherlands and New Zealand.

It was indeed a privilege and my most distinguished honour to be a part of this gathering. In order to mark the occasion, Pericles' poems which were written over 2500 years ago during the Peloponnesian war were read out. The ringing words still have resonance today. This was accompanied by the haunting wail of the bag pipes and the last call by the bugle, as poppy wreaths were laid.

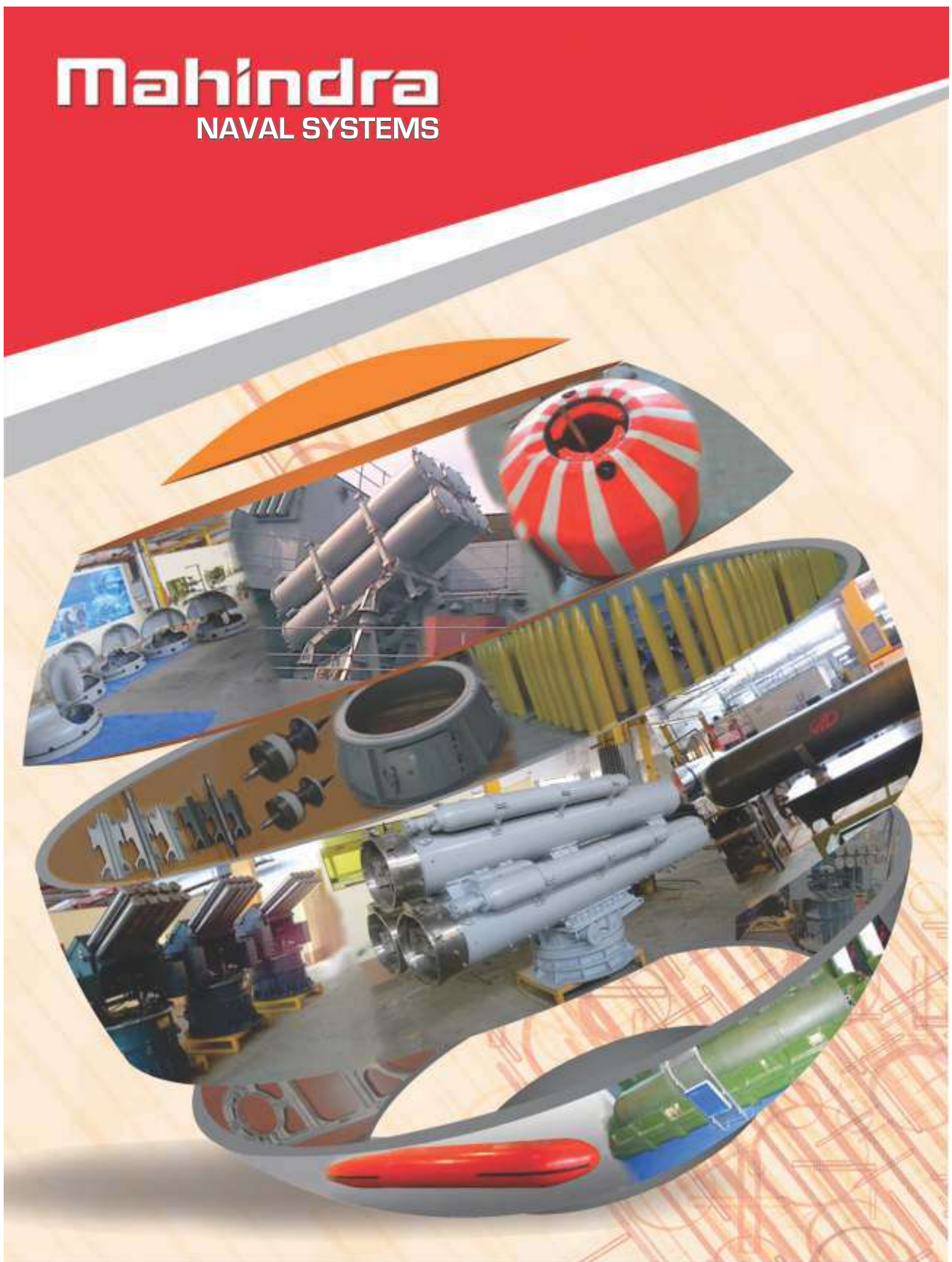
The assemblage paid tribute to those whose lives were sacrificed in the two world wars and subsequent wars that followed. The ceremony was attended by the official representatives of the UK, Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the EU, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Romania and Peru.

We all gathered to remember the martyrs; but there were few left who remembered it from their own living memory. We all gathered to inspire; perhaps the young present whom we hoped would similarly defend their country if they knew what that truly meant. We all gathered for peace.

The author is the Commanding Officer of the Sea Cadet Corps, Pune Unit and ASLI Visiting Fellow at NUS Singapore.

Mahindra

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Naviator Hybrid Unmanned Vehicle



Naviator in Water

Rutgers-developed Naviator hybrid unmanned vehicle continues to gain traction as a leading drone innovation

It was probably the biggest success we have to date,” enthuses Francisco Javier Diez, a professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Rutgers University, USA, who is leading the development of the Naviator multi-medium unmanned aerial and underwater vehicle. “There was a continuous influx of government officials. We were answering questions all day.”

Diez is recounting a recent demonstration of the Naviator at the US Office of Naval Research's 2017 Naval Future Force Science and Technology Expo. Held in Washington, D.C., the biennial expo is the premier science and technology event for the US Navy and Marine Corps, showcasing the latest technological developments and drawing several thousand attendees.

Prototype

Diez and his team of student engineers released

the initial prototype of the drone in 2013. However, he says the turning point came in December 2015 when a video of the Naviator went viral on Facebook, reaching more than 10 million views.

“All of a sudden, we realised we had a real hit,” Diez says. “We didn't realise how much interest there was until we got the video out.”

The US Office of Naval Research was so impressed with what it saw that it quickly offered the project a US\$618,000 (£475,000) grant. “They told me they'd never seen anything like it,” says Diez, who at first compares the vehicle to what nature does. “There are birds that dive into water and fish that fly,” he says.

But that comparison breaks down quickly. “Waterfowl are still better at flying than swimming, and flying fish are still better at swimming than flying. Our device is equally adept at both,” he says. “In a sense, we are defying nature rather than emulating it.”

Diez predicts many potential applications for the Naviator. For search and rescue, for instance, the



Naviator hovering on bridge

vehicle could scan the water from above to locate missing swimmers and sailors, and upon spotting shipwreck debris could dip underwater to further examine the scene. At an oil spill site, it could map the spread of a spill and see how deep the plume reaches.

But what specifically makes the concept attractive to the R&D arm of the United States Navy? “Mines are probably the biggest problem for the Navy,” says Diez. “They need to map where mines are. Now there are a lot of false positives. This could be a better technology to rapidly investigate these potential threats.”

And in naval warfare, a fleet of drones could be stationed out of sight in an underwater base or on a submarine. The drones could emerge quickly from the depths, get a quick glimpse of enemy ship deployments, and then hide again.

Inspection

The Naviator's triumph at the 2017 Naval Future Force Science and Technology Expo followed on from historic aerial and underwater demonstrations in June this year, where the drone successfully inspected the Delaware Memorial Bridge twin spans and a 100-passenger vessel at the Cape May ferry terminal, located in Delaware

Bay, New Jersey, USA.

“The Naviator's ability to seamlessly and rapidly transition from flying in the air to manoeuvring underwater provides tremendous opportunities, not only for naval operations, but also for a number of industries,” says Diez. “As these tests demonstrated, what previously might require a helicopter, boat and underwater equipment, the Naviator was able to complete as a single deployment with fewer complications and in less time.”

The drone not only reduces the amount of steps required for a mission, it also can operate in bad weather – when an inspection is sometimes needed the most, Diez says. Rutgers collaborated with the Delaware River Bay Authority (DRBA) to conduct June's demonstrations.

“Our infrastructure assets are subject to rigorous inspection programmes on an annual basis, and drones have the potential to make these inspections significantly safer and more cost efficient,” says Thomas Cook, DRBA executive director. “The ability to have a single vehicle inspect piers or vessels both above and below the water line is no longer science fiction.”

Future

With the United States Navy's continued support, Diez and his team at Rutgers University are working on advancing the technology. They say their next step is to make the Naviator autonomous. “My vision is autonomy: pre-programme the mission and reduce the amount of work for the pilot,” says Diez.

Compiled from intoceansys.co.uk

Letter from London

By
Paul Ridgway



HMS Sutherland to deploy to Asia Pacific

Newly-appointed Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced on 24 November that HMS Sutherland will leave HM Naval Base Devonport early this year to represent UK interests across the Indian Ocean and into the Pacific. In a period of ongoing tension in the Korean peninsula, the Type 23 frigate will be available to work closely with the UK's regional partners, including the US, Japan and the Republic of Korea, and will participate in joint exercises.

Royal Navy mounts Palace guard

For the first time ever the Royal Navy performed ceremonial royal duties in London when they mounted guard for two weeks in November. In all 86 sailors from 45 warships and shore establishments learnt the intricate routines and drill movements needed for royal duties at Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace, Windsor Castle and the Tower of London.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones,

reflected by saying: 'The sight of sailors undertaking public duties in our capital city is a sign that the Royal Navy is back where it belongs, at the very heart of national life. These young men and women are some of the finest ambassadors we could wish for and I know they will make the Navy and the Nation proud'.

RFA Tidespring joins the Fleet

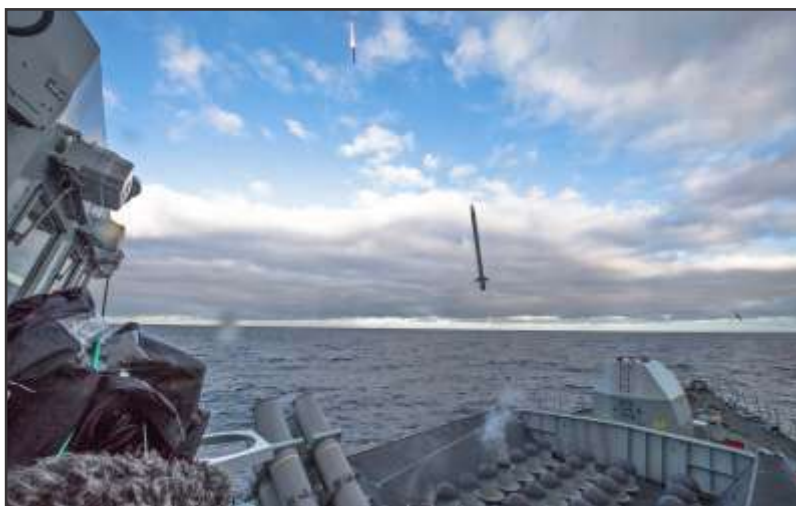
On 27 November RFA Tidespring was welcomed to the Fleet. The new 37,000 tonne ship is the first of class of the Military Afloat Reach & Sustainability (MARS) Tankers and together with her three sister ships Tiderace, Tidesurge and Tideforce, are flexible, advanced design double-hulled vessels, which will provide key future support to the Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carriers.

HM The Queen commissions HMS Queen Elizabeth

HM The Queen spoke at a ceremony in Portsmouth's Naval Base on the morning of 7 Dec

2017 where she was attended by HRH The Princess Royal, the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and service chiefs. In her role as the ship's Lady Sponsor HM addressed guests before the Ship's CO, Captain Jerry Kyd, read the commissioning warrant. The White Ensign was then raised, symbolising the commissioning of the nation's future flagship into the Fleet.

Completing final build activity and preparing for helicopter trials Queen Elizabeth will head to the United States for initial flight trials off the coast in autumn 2018.



Sea Ceptor Missile Test Firing

Prince Harry as Captain General RM

On 19 December HM The Queen gave her formal approval to the appointment of HRH Prince Henry of Wales as Captain General Royal Marines in succession to HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke's association with the Royal Marines dates back 64 years to 2 June 1953, when he was appointed Captain General in succession to the late King George VI. The Corps of the Royal Marines is at the heart of the Royal Navy's amphibious capability, acknowledged as one of the world's elite commando forces, with a long and illustrious history.

Sea Ceptor missile firing tests completed

MoD reported on 20 December that firing trials of the new Sea Ceptor air defence missile system over the Hebrides range off the coast of Scotland had been successfully completed. The new missile defence system will provide a powerful shield against airborne targets – including hostile combat jets and helicopters, as well enemy missiles travelling at supersonic speeds. Designed and manufactured by MBDA in the UK, Sea Ceptor is being fitted to replace the Sea Wolf weapon system on the Type 23 frigates and

will provide the same capability for the Royal Navy's future Type 26 frigates. The system uses a new UK-developed missile, the Common Anti-air Modular Missile or CAMM, that is capable of reaching speeds of up to three times the speed of sound, and will have the ability to deal with multiple targets simultaneously.

IMO Workshops on Stowaways

From its London HQ IMO is continuing to assist countries with the highest number of stowaway incidents recorded. This is achieved by broadcasting knowledge of effective port security measures, and, thereby,

helping to facilitate the free flow of international maritime traffic. This was reported from IMO a few days before 2017 / 2018 Festive Break. In previous weeks workshops had been held in the ports of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and Dakar, Senegal. At those gatherings participants from the relevant national authorities were trained to plan and conduct effective self-assessments and to undertake internal/external audits of port facilities, in line with IMO guidance on voluntary self-assessment.

Paul Ridway is IMF's Honorary Correspondent, London

Sea Battles in the Pacific 1941-45 III

By

Cdr Mukund Yeolekar (Retd)

Despite the severe reverses suffered at Midway in June 1942 where they lost four Carriers, the Japanese with an aggressive mindset forged ahead in July'42 with construction of an airfield on Guadalcanal, part of Solomon Islands (a British Protectorate) which they had occupied in May'42. In their strategy, the aircraft based there could provide air cover for Japanese naval forces advancing farther into the South Pacific.

This could threaten logistic support to Allied forces from Australia and New Zealand.

The United States launched an offensive strike known as "**island-hopping**," with the aim to capture certain key islands, one after another, until Japan came within range of American bombers. Led by General Douglas MacArthur, Commander of the Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific, and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, the first stage of the offensive began with the Marine landings on Guadalcanal and nearby islands in the Solomons.

Guadalcanal Campaign. About 75 warships and transports had assembled at Fiji under the command of V Adm Frank Fletcher on board the USS Saratoga. With the aim of denying the use of

Guadalcanal to the Japanese, the Allied forces on 07 Aug 1942 launched the first major campaign from sea, land and from the air, codenamed Operation Watchtower. This was the first major offensive by the Allied forces against Imperial Japan. 16000 US Marines supported by the US and Australian Navies landed on Guadalcanal, Tulagi and Florida on the southern Solomon Islands. They also intended to neutralize the major Japanese base at Rabaul on New Britain. In the surprise attack, the Marines overwhelmed the Japanese defenders and took over the airfield which was under construction. Undeterred, Japanese reinforcements came in rapidly and fierce fighting ensued. Admiral Yamamoto dispatched 11 transports with troops, ammunition, food and heavy equipment to support the next offensive. These were protected by two battleships. Later, in order to hasten deployment of troops at Guadalcanal and also avoid exposure to day-time Allied air attacks, the Japanese used destroyers to land the troops every night. These night runs were dubbed 'Tokyo Express' by the Allied forces.

The Japanese forces on the island reached a peak strength of 36,000 troops by October, but they were unable to overwhelm the Americans' defensive perimeter and retake the airfield. The gritty US Marines held on to the air field, later named Henderson Field, and wreaked heavy losses on the Japanese. US reinforcements too arrived and there were over 44000 troops to defend the island.

In the vicinity of and on the 2500 sq mile, thickly forested island of Guadalcanal there were three major land battles, five night time

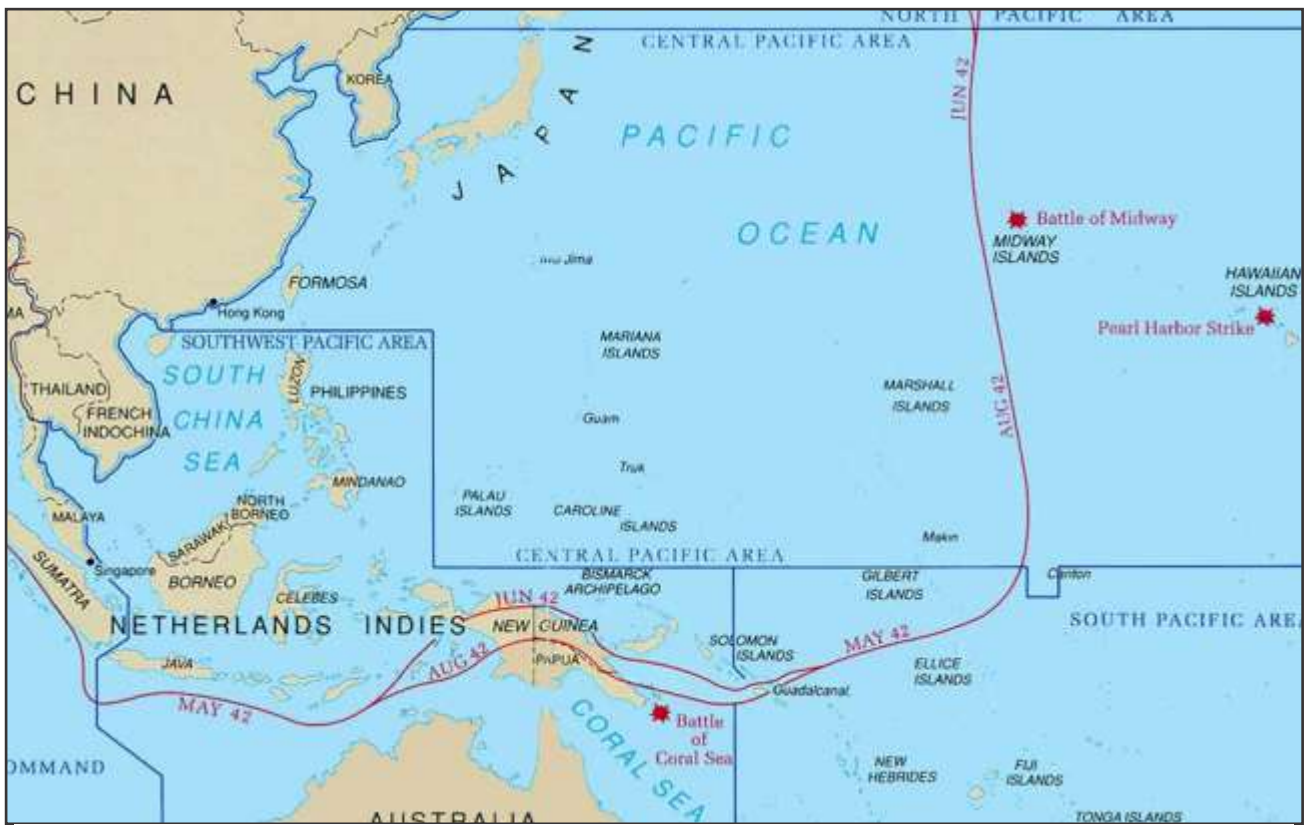


Japanese Battleship Haruna

naval surface battles and two Carrier battles in a span of six months. These were at Savo Island, Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz Islands, Cape Esperance etc. Both sides suffered heavy losses in ships. The Japanese lost two battleships, four cruisers, a light carrier besides several destroyers and a large number of their air crews. The US lost eight cruisers, three carriers (USS *Hornet* *Wasp* and severely damaged *Enterprise*) and fourteen destroyers. The Japanese made several attempts to retake the islands but finally gave in to the tenacious US Marines and Army XIV Corps. They decided to evacuate their forces in Feb 1943 after suffering heavy casualties which included large number who succumbed to malaria and other tropical diseases. **Strategically, possession of Guadalcanal's Henderson Field was important to control the sea lines of communication between the United States and Australia. The Guadalcanal Campaign was a**

significant, strategic, combined Arms victory for the Allies in the Pacific, which thwarted all Japanese expansion attempts and became a turning point in the War. With this milestone, from a position of supremacy began Allied offensive operations against Japan in New Guinea and Central Pacific.

Battle of Tarawa, Nov 1943. The Tarawa atoll in the Gilbert Islands, 2400 miles South West of Hawaii was under Japanese occupation from 1941. They had heavily fortified the tiny, three mile island of Betio (largest in the atoll) with about 4700 troops, a system of pill boxes, seawalls, extensive trenches, barbed wires and mines on the beaches. **After Solomon Islands, the US eyed Gilbert Islands, and had plans of taking over the Marshall Islands followed by Marianas in the Central Pacific. They considered Tarawa of significant strategic importance being located on its path towards**



West Pacific Theatre

the Philippines. On 20 Nov 1943 in an offensive code-named Operation Galvanic, under the command of RAdm A Spruance, a massive US Task Force of five escort carriers, three battle ships, two heavy cruisers, several destroyers, transports and landing ships was deployed for taking possession of Tarawa. About 18000 Marines were part of a monumental effort in the war tactic called as 'Atoll War' that was preceded by heavy bombardment by battleships and carrier borne aircraft.

The Marines approached the shore in amphibious vehicles that were armed with machine guns. Facing no resistance initially, they assumed that the enemy was totally wiped out by the bombardment. The landing was however ill-timed and coincided with low tide. While about 500 yards from shore, the amphibious vehicles stopped in a reef and the Japanese attacked with full fury taking the Marines by surprise. They dispatched a seaplane, equipped with bombs to attack the assault craft caught on the reef. That single aircraft became a great asset to the Japanese as it easily dropped bombs on the sitting ducks below, causing most of the damage.

Many of the craft were destroyed even before the Marines could disembark and very few managed to reach the shore. Many of them had to wade through chest-deep water amidst enemy fire. Precious gear and radios got soaked and rendered useless. Those who reached the shore were exhausted or wounded, ill-equipped and unable to communicate with those on ships. While 5000 Marines landed on the first day of the attack, about 1500 perished.

On the second day US destroyers maneuvered closer to shore and rendered supporting fire. Reserve combat support teams and craft transporting tanks and heavy weapons came to the rescue. The Marines fought gallantly and surged inland as the ground assault took a



US Carrier Wasp burning on 15 Sept 1942

positive turn for the Allies. The Japanese offered stiff resistance and fought with ferocity till the last man. On the third day, 22 Nov'43 the Marines continued their onslaught and destroyed the Japanese fortifications. **The defenders launched a furious but futile, suicidal Banzai charge. It may noted that a gruesome aspect of Banzai counterattacks was that if the Japanese ran out of ammunition or failed to overrun the enemy, then they committed suicide.** At the time of World War II, the Japanese held a slight technological advantage over the United States, and they did not want any other countries to gain knowledge of their weapons. **The soldiers were indoctrinated that, in the event of a Banzai charge, they were to kill themselves to avoid capture, if the counterattack failed. That prevented them from being interrogated and forced into giving information to the enemy.**

Finally on 23 Nov the island of Betio was declared secure after 76 hours of bloody fighting. All but 17 Japanese defending the island perished.

Cdr Mukund Yeolekar is Editor of SeaGull.

Compiled from www.us-history.com, Britannica and Wikipedia.

INSV Tarini – The Saga Continues

By

Cmde Ajay Chitnis (Retd)

Its 36 days since Tarini departed from Lyttleton on the third leg of her epoch round-the-world voyage, venturing into the Pacific Ocean, with next landfall likely in a day or so, when they pass Cape Horn, after covering a distance of over 7500 km. The message sent out by the crew today (17th January) is reproduced below:

“Rounding off the cape. A milestone to record. Coming up during the day. Going around this cape is one of the primary conditions of circumnavigation effort. We did pass a similar landmark in Australia - rounding Cape Leeuwin. Now Cape Horn and then next is Cape of Good Hope in African continent. Drake Passage crossing during day would be beneficial to see and negotiate ... rough weather with heavy wind is anticipated. We are ready....Will keep you informed”.

To continue from where I left off in the last edition of the Seagull, when Tarini had just left Freemantle, let me begin with quoting from the blog written by Lt B Aishwarya:

“So here we are again sailing the second leg of our journey another leap of faith another step into the unknown and wilderness... back to where we belong... We are always asked this question how does it feel to be at sea for so long? Believe me...nothing brings more calm and peace to me than seeing water all around waves surging past seeing the sun rise and set into the horizon between the sky and sea...frankly we have grown our sea legs to become amphibians over the past two years..., and we like going back to the sea in fact we surrender ourselves to the sea with Tarini, our saviour. I was missing this all the time we got to be on land and was secretly yearning for it for the past two weeks and I'm sure my shipmates

will agree more with me. Did we actually get to rest and recuperate over the past two weeks? I can only recollect running around the boat preparing it for Leg 2 and then going for all social engagements whenever we could find a little spare time... My cheeks still hurt for smiling for so many photographs thanks to a very packed up schedule by Defence Attaché India Navy and the Consulate General Perth. And now we are more at ease when at sea. Just us, Tarini and the Pacific it's a perfect harmony trust me surreal but true...”

On the 9th of November, Tarini rounded Cape Leeuwin, the first of the three Great Capes that need to be rounded for an expedition such as this one to be recognized as a 'Circumnavigation'. They subsequently crossed the 40 Degrees South Latitude and entered the 'Roaring Forties'. Here it is in the words of Lt Aishwarya:

“It's been five days at sea and we have crossed 40 Degree latitude the area is generally called Roaring forties why so? Western winds move in both the hemispheres (northern and southern) between 35 to 60 degrees latitudes. In the southern hemisphere, these winds show a very stormy nature after 40-degree latitude. This remains constant in summer as well as in winter. In the olden days, sailors called them 'roaring forties' since these winds create a very noisy atmosphere and were not favourable for them at all. We have also achieved another big milestone of our journey we rounded one of the three great capes of our voyage that's Cape Leeuwin, most south-westerly mainland point of the Australian-Continent Due to the significant hazards they presented to shipping, the great capes became significant landmarks in ocean voyaging”.

Across the Tasman Sea the crew sailed steadily making good progress towards their next port of

call – Lyttleton, in New Zealand. Here is another quote from the blog about the Auroras:

“It is always a surprise when nature catches you unaware just when you are lost into its mesmerizing beauty such was our awe when we witnessed AURORAS - the southern lights. Mind

you, only a lucky few get to witness this at sea; let me share some wonders of nature we witnessed on our way to Lyttelton. We were fortunate to have witnessed auroras three consecutive nights... they were these green streaks of lights strewn across the sky glowing dark somewhere and not so bright elsewhere; we were smitten watching them and even tried to capture them but I guess we need special lenses for that. No wonder people plan a trip to Iceland to witness the northern lights ...some wonders of nature can only be experienced. When we were making our way up towards Lyttelton and were quite close to the shore hugging the coast to gain some speed one pleasant morning, we saw some dolphins from far closing in on us. Upon closer examination we discovered that they were quite huge in size and fins located closer to the tail they were so huge that their proximity to the boat was got us worried but smart mammals that they are one wandering dolphin dived below the boat and surfaced on the other side as we watched it dumbstruck. A little research on the internet a while later told us that these were pilot whales which are a kind of dolphin found usually in the region this part of the year. I feel like Alice in wonderland narrating all the wonders I get to witness here.”

The crew of INSV Tarini was officially welcomed to Lyttelton by Mr Andrew Turner,



Tarini's tough ladies

Deputy Mayor of Christchurch on 29 November 2017. The crew was also welcomed in the traditional Maori culture by members of the community. Their eventful stay at Christchurch is best captured in Lt Aishwarya's Blog:

"Coming to our brief

sojourn in Lyttelton and Christchurch it went like a breeze, thanks to many people starting with our Director Indian Naval Sailing Association Cdr Neel Manjooran, who came as our shore support and was true to his word a great shore support, planning ahead our activities and being a great support in facilitating repairs on board. We also celebrated his birthday in NZ in a very special way. Had long intellectual talks and debates regarding various internal and external aspects regarding our voyage probably driving him to his wits end. Also joining him was Capt Jayant Mahadik an experienced seafarer himself for being with us every step of our stay in New Zealand. We also enjoyed great company of his good lady Sharyu and of course our Defence Attache, Capt Chetan Chandagawe again joined us and we became a great gang of ten to tango.

All the kiwis and their families for making us feel at home wherever we went and of course we also learnt a lot about their rich Maori culture and heritage and how they still keep these traditions alive just like we do back in our country. We discovered it on the day of our arrival where they welcomed us in their traditional way “kiaora”, accepting us as their friends and keeping a memoir of us with them”.

Viki Moore President of Little Ship Club of Canterbury Yacht Club, was our secret Santa, leaving us gifts on the boat and hosting us both at

the yacht club and at her home, where we had a great time interacting with fellow seafarers. Something she said that really intrigued me was she was visiting her parents for the weekend and she was going to sail 8 hrs by sea to her parents place, lovely isn't it? Guess it will take a while for us to take our boats and go out on holiday and visit family or even consider it a mode of transport. Come and think of it less traffic, no pollution, fresh oxygen, starlit dinners and moonlit bedtime stories wouldn't that be just amazing to find solace at sea? Food for thought!

Another of nature's wonder we witnessed during our stay was the day when we were working on board and this beautiful Halo appeared around the sun; it's called a sun bow and forms when the sun rays fall over ice crystals in the atmosphere at an angle of 23degrees precisely we managed to take a photograph making it look like halo on our heads

During our stay in New Zealand we also celebrated the Navy Day and dressed Tarini for the occasion and were fortunate to talk to our honourable defence minister who conveyed her best wishes to us."

After the brief stop-over, Tarini departed on the 12th of December on their third and probably, the toughest leg of their voyage, crossing the Pacific Ocean and heading towards Cape Horn, the Southernmost point of South America. Their next port of call – Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands.

Here is another report from Tarini, on 15th December 2017:
Historic Moment.



Tarini in the Furious Fifties, South Pacific

Hurray....breaking news. INSV Tarini has crossed the international date line, at 0630h. 180 degrees East is now behind us...On the 16th of December, Tarini passed the Chatham Islands, the last landmass they would see till they reached Cape Horn, 4000 nm away!

Here is the New Year Message sent out by the Tarini

New year wishes from inside the sailing vessel. Happy New Year -Welcome 2018. Bake the cake and enjoy Deepawali, Christmas and New Year while sailing Next is Republic Day and Holi out in the lap of nature. We are enjoying the biting fun and cool work load, but its the chilling cold that adds vigour and josh .

The vessel and her crew experienced some of the worst weather during the first week of January, while negotiating the 'Furious Fifties', as the latitudes South of 50 Degrees South are called by sailors. A photo is worth a thousand words they say, but I feel that a Video multiplies that effect by a thousand... All readers are invited to share the experiences of the Braveheart ladies on board by watching the videos posted by them on their Facebook page – NavikaSagar Parikrama. One

can only wish them well and pray to Lord Varuna to be with them always!

By the time this edition of Seagull reaches you, Tarini would hopefully on her way from Port Stanley towards the Cape of Good Hope, the third of the Great Capes to be rounded, after Cape Leewin and Cape Horn.

Cmde Ajay Chitnis is Vice President IMF and Joint Editor of Seagull

IMF 24th Anniversary Function

By
Capt AC Dixit



Asst Comdt R Attri receiving the award

IMF crossed another milestone on 17th December 2018 when it celebrated the 24th anniversary of its founding.

Beginning with the modest goal of promoting awareness of the oceans and rekindling maritime consciousness in India, the IMF has grown in stature over the last two decades. Its range of activities now include, but not limited to running a Maritime Research Centre, a Maritime Museum and a library, conducting lectures at Pune University for post-graduate students in the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, conducting seminars on subjects of maritime interest, to name just a few.

The 24th anniversary function was held at Central Park Hotel in Pune. This occasion also coincided with the Award Ceremony for the essay competition sponsored by the IMF on 'Climate Change and its Impact on Environment and Global Security'.

Among the guests present that evening were, Maj Gen Ashwini Dewan, Major

Arun and Pratibha Phatak, Capt Deepak and Shubha Honawar, Mr Praful Talera and Mr Venkat and Anuradha Kurma. Also present were the two winners of the essay competition- Asst Comdt Rajkamal Attri and Sub-Lieut Mohammad Ziauddin Parvez who had come down from Mumbai and Vishakhapatnam respectively, specially for the occasion.

Cmde R Vir, President IMF, in his welcome address highlighted the achievements of the IMF over the past 24 years and explained the concept behind the Essay Competition sponsored by the

IMF. He specially mentioned that all the 51 papers received were of a very high order.

Capt AC Dixit, Chairman of the Awards Committee, elaborated on the selection methodology for selecting the best essays.

This was followed by the presentation of awards and certificates to the winners. Asst Comdt Rajkamal Attri received the award for the best essay in the senior category (Lt Commander and



Sub Lt Mohammad Z Parvez receiving the award for junior category



Cutting the Anniversary Cake

above) and Sub-Lieut Mohammad Ziauddin Parvez the award for the best essay in junior

category (Lieut and below).

The Runner-up prize in the Senior Category went to Lt Cdr Kanishk Kamal (INS Hamla) and in the Junior Category to Cadets Abhishek Goswami and Gautam Kumar Mishra of Tolani Maritime Foundation jointly. The Runners-up were not present on the occasion but arrangements have been made for them to receive their awards.

The formal presentation of the awards over, the rest of the evening was devoted to socializing and ended with cocktails and a delicious dinner.

Capt AC Dixit is Vice President IMF.

Breaking Bread At Royal Bombay Yacht Club

By

Cdr Mukund Yeolekar (Retd)

The IMF regularly expresses its gratitude to all its well-wishers and supporters who have extended unstinting assistance in all activities and endeavors.

We were proud to host a lunch on 10 Jan 2018 to many of our well wishers from various fields. The venue chosen was none other than the fabled Royal Bombay Yacht Club near the Gateway of India in Mumbai. The stately, seafront clubhouse edifice built in 1881, has English neo-Gothic architecture and is a treat to the discerning eye. It has a unique Nautical ambience, replete with ornate fittings, antique furniture and memorabilia of a bygone Maritime era and it is no wonder that the RBYC was honored with UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage award in 2013.

We were delighted to host several luminaries such as Shri Arun Sharma CMD Indian Register of Shipping, Capt Vinay Singh GM Anglo-Eastern Ship Management, Capt SS Naphade former Nautical Adviser to GoI, Capt Kiran Kamat MD Link Shipping, Capt RY Barve MD Harold Maritime, Brig Prakash Tolani Director Siemens Software, Shri Shetty, Cmde Ashok

Aukta Addl Director Maritime Warfare Centre and Cmde Anand Abhyankar Command Education Officer of WNC.

Cmde Rajan Vir President IMF, welcomed all and briefly enumerated the various activities of IMF in action packed 2017. The important ones were the Annual IMF Seminar on Indian Maritime Paradigm, the Underwater Domain Awareness Seminar at Kochi, the 90th issue of Seagull and the extensive IMF effort in Coastal Clean-up. All of these were successful due to the cooperation and benevolence of those present. He lauded the encouragement and timely support extended by the Merchant Marine, the Indian Navy, the Shipbuilders and the Industry. He expressed sincere gratitude on behalf of the IMF and looked forward for continued support from all. He thanked all guests for gracing the occasion and for sparing their valuable time in attending the lunch.

The delicious fare for the lunch lent gaiety to the occasion.

Cdr Mukund Yeolekar is Editor SeaGull

Operation *Python* - 1971

Operation *Python*, a follow-up to Operation *Trident*, was the code name of a naval attack launched on West Pakistan's port city of Karachi by the Indian Navy during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. After the first attack during Operation *Trident* on the Port of Karachi, Pakistan stepped up aerial surveillance of its coast as the presence of large Indian Navy ships gave the impression that another attack was being planned. Pakistani warships attempted to outsmart the Indian Navy by mingling with merchant shipping. To counter these moves, Operation *Python* was launched on the night of 8/9 December 1971. A strike group consisting of one missile boat and two frigates attacked the group of ships off the coast of Karachi. While India suffered no losses, Pakistani fleet tanker PNS *Dacca* was damaged beyond repair, and the Kemari Oil Storage facility was lost. Two other foreign ships stationed in Karachi were also sunk during the attack.

Background. In 1971, the Port of Karachi housed the headquarters of the Pakistan Navy and almost the entire Pakistan Naval fleet was based at Karachi Harbour. It is also the hub of Pakistan's maritime trade, meaning that a blockade would be disastrous for Pakistan's economy. The defence of Karachi harbour was therefore paramount to the Pakistani High Command.

Towards the end of 1971, there were rising tensions between India and Pakistan, and after Pakistan declared a national emergency on 23 November, the Indian Navy deployed three Vidyut-class missile boats in the vicinity of Okha, near Karachi, to carry out patrols. As the Pakistani fleet would also be operating in the same waters, the Indian Navy set a demarcation line which ships in their fleet would not cross. Later this deployment proved to be useful to gain

experience in the region's waters. On 3 December, after Pakistan attacked Indian airfields along the border, the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 officially began.

Operation. The Indian Naval Headquarters (NHQ) in Delhi along with the Western Naval Command planned to attack the strategically important Port of Karachi. A strike group under Western Naval Command, was formed. This strike group was to be formed around the three Vidyut-class missile boats already deployed off the coast of Okha. However these had limited operational and radar range and to overcome this difficulty, it was decided to assign support vessels to the group. On 4 December, what was now designated as the Karachi Strike Group was formed and consisted of the three Vidyut-class missile boats: INS *Nipat*, INS *Nirghat* and INS *Veer*, each armed with four SS-N-2B Styx surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 40 nautical miles (74 km; 46 mi), two Kamorta class anti-submarine corvettes: INS *Kiltan* and INS *Katchall*, and a fleet tanker, INS *Poshak*. The group was under the command of Commander Babru Bhan Yadav, the Commanding Officer of the 25th Missile Boat Squadron.

On the night of 4/5 December, the Indian Navy launched Operation *Trident* with the Karachi Strike Group off the coast of Karachi. This operation saw the first use of anti-ship missiles in combat in the region and inflicted heavy damage on the Pakistanis. While India suffered no losses, Pakistan lost one destroyer, one minesweeper, a cargo vessel carrying ammunition and fuel storage tanks in Karachi. Another destroyer was also badly damaged and had, eventually, to be scrapped. The Pakistan Air Force retaliated against these attacks by bombing Okha Harbour, scoring direct hits on fueling facilities for missile

boats, an ammunition dump, and the missile boats' jetty. The Indian Navy had anticipated this attack and had already moved the missile boats to other locations to prevent any losses. The destruction of the fuelling facilities, however, prevented any further incursions until Operation Python was executed three days later.

Though the Indian Navy achieved significant success with Operation Trident, its main target, the oil storage facilities in Karachi, were still operational as only one of the two missiles fired had hit them. This failure was later assessed as the result of confusion created between the commanding officers of the three missile boats. Furthermore, the Indians mistook tracer fire from the coastal artillery of Karachi as originating from Pakistani aircraft, and retreated hurriedly before they could properly target the tanks. After the first attack during Operation Trident on the Port of Karachi, Pakistan stepped up aerial surveillance of its coast as the presence of large Indian Navy ships gave the impression that another attack was being planned. Pakistani warships attempted to outsmart the Indian Navy by mingling with merchant shipping. To counter these moves, Operation *Python* was launched.

Attack. On the night of 8/9 December 1971, at 10:00 pm Pakistan Standard Time (PKT), in rough seas, a small strike group consisting of the missile boat INS *Vinash*, equipped with four Styx missiles, and two multipurpose frigates, INS *Talwar* and INS *Trishul*, approached Manora, a peninsula south of the Port of Karachi. During their voyage, a Pakistani patrol vessel was encountered and sunk. The Indian Navy's official historian, Vice Admiral Hiranandani in his book *Transition to Triumph*, mentioned that while the group approached Karachi, electronic surveillance revealed that the radar there had stopped rotating and was directed straight at the group, confirming that it had been detected.

Around 11.00 pm (PKT), the group detected a batch of ships at a distance of 12 nm (22 km; 14 mi). *Vinash* immediately fired four of its missiles,

the first of which struck the fuel tanks at the Kemari Oil Farm causing a heavy explosion. Another missile hit and sank the Panamanian fuel tanker SS *Gulf Star*. The third and fourth missiles hit the Pakistani Navy fleet tanker PNS *Dacca* and the British merchant vessel SS *Harmattan*. *Dacca* was damaged beyond repair, while *Harmattan* sank. As *Vinash* had now expended all of its missiles, the group immediately withdrew to the nearest Indian port.

Between Operations Trident and Python, and the Indian Air Force attacks on Karachi's fuel and ammunition depots, more than fifty percent of the total fuel stock of the Karachi zone was reported to have been destroyed. The result was a crippling economic blow to Pakistan. The Pakistan Air Force was also affected by the loss of fuel.

Aftermath. With no casualties observed on the Indian side, both missile attacks (Trident and Python) led the Pakistan Navy to take extreme measures to prevent any further damage. The rescue efforts were immediately coordinated by RAdm Patrick Simpson who kept morale high among the Pakistani Navy officers. For this, he was awarded the *Sitara-e-Jurat*. Lt Cdr Vijai Jerath, the commanding officer of *Vinash*, was awarded the Vir Chakra for this operation. The Pakistani High Command ordered ships to reduce their ammunition dumps so as to reduce the explosion damage, if hit. The ships were also ordered not to manoeuvre out at sea, especially during the night, unless ordered to do so. These two measures severely demoralized Pakistani naval crews. With the destruction caused by the Indian Navy, neutral merchant vessels soon started to seek safe passage from the Indian authorities before heading to Karachi. Gradually, neutral ships ceased sailing for Karachi. In effect, a de facto naval blockade was created by the Indian Navy.

Compiled from Wikipedia

*By Capt Sunand Kanetkar Associate Editor
SeaGull*

The Battle of Haifa-1918

In order to commemorate the centenary of World War I(1914-18), we bring out this interesting account of Battle of Haifa (in present day Israel). In this decisive battle the valiant Indian soldiers of Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers covered themselves with glory fighting the Ottoman Turks and Germans.

The Israeli city of Haifa was liberated from Ottoman occupation by Indian soldiers of the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade during World War I, on 23 Sep 2018. There are various accounts of this battle - all of which narrate the valour with which the lancers undertook the assault on the garrisoned city protected by a joint force of Ottomans, Germany and Austria-Hungary. Forty-four Indian soldiers of the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade died in the battle to free the city. The liberation of Haifa cleared a supply route for the Allies to the city through the sea.

The 15th IS Cavalry Brigade consisted of three famous Indian State Forces Cavalry Regiments: the Jodhpur IS Lancers, Mysore IS Lancers and the Hyderabad IS Lancers, and formed a part of the 5th Cavalry division of the Desert Mounted Corps. The 5th Cavalry Division was assigned the task of capturing Haifa and Acre after several earlier attempts were stopped by strong rearguard positions. A squadron from the Mysore Lancers, and a squadron from the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry, 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade formed the initial attack on an Austrian artillery battery before moving forward with the Jodhpur Lancers and a light car patrol, to attack



**Mysore Lancers Memorial,
Bangalore**

the main German rearguard position and capture the town. The port city was finally freed after 400 years of Turkish control.

Forty-four Indian soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice during the liberation of the city in World War I and are buried in the Haifa cemetery. The Jodhpur Lancers' commander Major Dalpat Singh Shekhawat, was killed in the battle, and was posthumously awarded the Military Cross. The Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers are now represented by 61st Cavalry Regiment in the Indian Army.

23rd September is annually observed as 'Haifa Day' in commemoration of the capture of that city following the dashing cavalry action by the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade during the First World War. Memorials for those killed in this battle were erected in Delhi, Mysore and Bangalore.

This was the last time horse cavalry was used in battle as introduction of guns, trench warfare and barbed wires changed everything.

Apart from the Teen Murti Haifa memorial there are two other memorials; one in Bangluru and other in Mysore commemorating those who laid down their lives in the battle for Haifa.

The Jodhpur Lancers charged the Ottoman position, crossing the Acre railway line, but came under machine gun and artillery fire. The charge was further obstructed by quicksand on the river banks, so they manoeuvred to the left onto the lower slopes of Mount Carmel. The regiment secured the position capturing thirty prisoners, two machine guns, two camel guns and opening

up an access route into Haifa. The Jodhpur Lancers continued their charge into the town, surprising the defenders. Those Mysore Lancers who had been giving fire support to the attacking regiment, mounted and followed them into the town. Together the two regiments captured 1,350 German and Ottoman prisoners, including two German officers, 35 Ottoman officers, 17 artillery guns including four 4.2 guns, eight 77mm guns and four camel guns as well as a 6-inch naval gun, and 11 machine guns. Their own casualties amounted to eight dead and 34 wounded. 60 horses were killed and another 83 injured.

The Jodhpur Lancers' commander Major Dalpat Singh Shekhawat, who was killed in the battle, was posthumously awarded the Military Cross. The Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers are now represented by 61st Cavalry Regiment in the Indian Army and still commemorate the battle every year on 23 September as Haifa Day.

New Delhi: 23rd September is annually observed as 'Haifa Day' in commemoration of the capture of that city following a dashing cavalry action by the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade during the First World War. In the autumn of 1918, the Brigade was a part of the Allied Forces sweeping northwards through Palestine under Allenby, rolling up the remnants of the Turkish Seventh and the Eighth Armies and their German allies in the last great cavalry campaign in history.

On 23rd Sept 1918 the Brigade less the Hyderabad Lancers, was ordered to advance and capture Haifa in present day Israel. The sun-baked city of Haifa lies due north of Jerusalem on the southern shore of the Bay of Acre on the Mediterranean coast. The road and the railway leading into the town is dominated by the steep wooded slopes of Mount Carmel to the south and bounded by the swift and swampy Nahr el Muqatta or River Kishon to the north. The approach into the town therefore had to be made

through the narrow defile between mountain and river, and this was well covered by fire by the Turkish gun emplacements and artillery. The Turks were strongly posted just outside Haifa to hold the defile thus formed.

The Jodhpur Lancers was commanded by Major Dalpat Singh. Lt Col Hyla Holden was the special service British officer with the regiment. He chose his senior most and experienced 'B' Squadron Commander Captain Aman Singh to lead the attack and capture the defile. After the capture of the defile the 'D' Squadron under Captain Anop Singh was to attack the Mount on east of the road after passing through the defile to capture machine guns located on it. Thus the capture of the defile was the most critical operation to the whole battle.

To avoid this dangerous defile, it was decided to cross the Kishon and attack the town from the north-east. A Squadron of the Mysore Lancers was sent east of Haifa and another squadron was sent up from the north to silence the enemy guns on Mount Carmel. After giving this movement time to develop, the Jodhpur Lancers were ready to make a mounted attack on the Turks holding the defile from the east. In the meantime frequent patrols were sent to reconnoiter the ground and locate the enemy. No news reached about the action of the squadrons sent out earlier to silence the enemy guns.

At 2 PM Brigadier Harbord the Brigade Commander ordered the Jodhpur Lancers for the attack. The Jodhpur Lancers from a position of readiness 500 yards north-east of Beled Esh Sheikh moved forward at a trot with 'B' Sqn leading, cantered out in to open towards the stream, coming under intense fire as they crossed the Acre railway line. A previous reconnaissance of the proposed crossing point had been prevented by heavy enemy fire. Now, approaching the river it was found that the bank leading down to the water was very steep, even worse, as the two scouts in front forced their

horses down the steep embankment to the water's edge they were swallowed up in quicksand. It was obvious that no crossing was possible.

By now the regiment was out in the open with no cover, and was being raked by fire of 77 mm guns from the front and flank, and horses were falling fast. Lt Col Holden now ordered Maj Dalpat to quickly swing the regiment to the left and charge the machine guns on the lower slopes of Mount Carmel. As the squadrons reversed direction, Maj Dalpat was hit in the spine by a machine gun bullet and was felled (he died later that night on the operation table).

The 'D' Sqn passed through the defile and galloped up the road, wheeled half right and charged two machine guns on a Mount east of the road, capturing both. Passions inflamed at the loss of their gallant CO Maj Dalpat, the remaining two squadrons now dipped their lances to the 'charge' and thundered down the road straight into the town. So unexpected and rapid was the whole attack that the enemy did not have enough time to react to it, several Turks being ridden down in the streets.

Comments. Meanwhile after clearing the defile the 'B' Sqn made its way along the lower slopes of Mount Carmel, and charged into the German colony west of Haifa, capturing several machine guns and killing large numbers of Turks and Germans.

As soon as the charge got home the two squadrons of Mysore Lancers who had supported the attack with their fire mounted and followed at a gallop into the town. Shots were fired by Turks here and there from behind the walls of houses but the fight had practically finished as soon as the defile was crossed by the leading 'B' squadron. A large number of the enemy were still hiding in the town disguised as Arabs, those were gradually rounded up. This action is regarded as the finest cavalry charges ever made, the regiment captured a total of 700 prisoners

(including 2 German and 23 Turkish officers) as well as 17 guns (2 six inch naval guns, 4 four point two inch guns, 6 77 mm guns, 4 10-lb guns) and 11 machine guns and a large amount of ammunition were collected at Haifa after the action. The total casualties suffered by our troops were 1 officer, 7 Other Ranks, 60 horses killed; 6 officers, 28 Other Ranks and 83 horses wounded.

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Compiled from Wikipedia by Capt Sunand Kanetkar, Associate Editor Seagull

Gallimaufry

Royal Navy's Biggest-Ever Warship



The Royal Navy's aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, docked on 7 Dec 2017.

The UK's biggest and most-advanced aircraft carrier, HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, was commissioned into the Royal Navy on 7 Dec. 2017 by Her Majesty the Queen during a ceremony at the Portsmouth Naval Base, England.

Having successfully completed second stage of sea trials off the south coast of England, the HMS *Queen Elizabeth* returned recently alongside her home port of Portsmouth. The aircraft carrier is the first of two planned *Queen Elizabeth*-class carriers. At 70,600 tonnes, she is the biggest warship ever constructed for the UK Royal Navy.

Both new aircraft carriers will be able to perform a wide range of tasks, from humanitarian and disaster relief to fighting terrorism and high-end war-fighting. The second carrier, HMS *Prince of Wales*, has already been named in Rosyth and is currently structurally complete.

USS *John S. McCain*

After more than two months aboard the heavy lift vessel MV *Treasure*, the USS *John S. McCain* arrived at U.S. Navy base in Yokosuka where it will undergo repairs following its collision with a tanker in August 2017. *John S. McCain* arrived in Tokyo Bay aboard heavy-lift transport vessel December 5, where it anchored as crews prepared for the offload. She will be repaired by U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility-Japan Regional Maintenance



John S McCain Aboard the heavy lift vessel MV Treasure

Center in Yokosuka before returning to service in U.S. Seventh Fleet.

McCain was involved in a collision with the merchant vessel *Alnic MC* while underway east of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore on Aug 21. After the incident the ship pulled into Changi Naval Base, Singapore where *McCain* crew members, technicians and divers prepared the destroyer for her journey back to Japan by patching damaged sections of the hull and placing key systems in layup maintenance.

Private Firm Kicks Off Search for Malaysia's Flight MH370

Sydney/Kuala Lumpur, Jan 23 (Reuters) – A U.S.-based company has begun searching for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, Malaysia said on Tuesday, as it tries to solve one of the world's greatest aviation mysteries. Flight MH370 disappeared en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing in March 2014 with 239 people, mostly Chinese, on board. Investigators believe someone may have deliberately switched off MH370's transponder before diverting it over the Indian Ocean. Debris has been collected from Indian Ocean islands and Africa's east coast and at least three pieces have been confirmed as coming from the missing plane.

Malaysia agreed earlier this month to pay U.S. firm Ocean Infinity up to \$70 million if it finds the plane within 90 days. The search vessel, the Seabed Constructor, set off from Durban, South Africa, on Jan. 3. Ocean Infinity's vessel carries eight “autonomous underwater vehicles,” or submersible craft, that will scour the seabed with scanning equipment for information to be sent back for analysis.

The Seabed Constructor began its search on Monday, Malaysia's Department of Civil Aviation said in a statement. Reuters shipping data shows the vessel reached the search zone on Sunday and on Tuesday was tracking towards a spot that Australia's scientific agency believes with “unprecedented precision and certainty” is the most likely location of the aircraft.

The eight submersibles can search a wide area of sea floor much faster than the tethered scanners used in previous searches, Charitha Pattiaratchi, professor of coastal oceanography at the University of Western Australia, told Reuters by phone from Colombo.

Inmarsat Offers New High-Speed Broadband Service Plans to OSV Market

London-based satellite communications provider Inmarsat is rolling out a new set of plans for its rapidly-expanding Fleet Xpress maritime high-speed broadband service that will be specifically tailored for the unique technical and commercial requirements of offshore support vessels.

The new plans will exploit the same technical capabilities of the Fleet Xpress service, such as high-speed connections and guaranteed performance, but with added flexibility to meet the swinging data usage needs typical of the high-end OSV sector.

“When on-hire, the appetite for bandwidth from OSVs can be immense,” Inmarsat said in a statement announcing the new plans. “Projects often generate considerable volumes of data that need sending back to shore for analysis, with third-party contractors onboard and an intense working environment. OSV operators are also traditionally generous with crew welfare.”

Supported by a 1-meter antenna, Fleet Xpress for OSVs will offer connectivity rates of up to 3Mbps for uploads and 6Mbps for downloads with a standard antenna, climbing to 5Mbps and 10Mbps, respectively with an enhanced antenna. When off-hire, vessels can use a more economic connection sufficient for keeping just core operational data exchange ticking over.

Iranian oil tanker Sinks.

By Yuka Obayashi Tokyo, (Reuters) – A stricken Iranian oil tanker continued exploding on Friday, 12 Jan, hampering rescue efforts, Chinese state media reported, as Japan's Coast Guard said the ship drifted away from the Chinese coast and into Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The tanker Sanchi, sank on 14 Jan after burning for more than a week following a collision on Jan. 6 in the East China Sea, Chinese state media said on Sunday, adding that a large amount of oil was burning in the surrounding waters.

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