

FORCENET

E-ZINE

Magazine for military veterans in the corporate
August 2023, Volume V, Issue 08

Women Warriors Inners



THE NETWORK THAT WORKS

FOCUS | PASSION | IMPACT

SCAN ME



FORCENET

From the Editor

Hello Friends,

Women have always been warriors. From Indian mythology, where we have women like Mata Mahakali to African history, where we have Dahomey, the Amazons of West Africa, to the female pilots of World War II, women have fought and won on the battlefield. Today, women continue to serve in the military, both in combat and in support roles. They are also making their mark in the corporate world, breaking down barriers and shattering glass ceilings.

This month, we celebrate the women who are warriors, both on the battlefield and in the boardroom. This month's theme is Women, Warriors, Winners. When we decided to dedicate this Issue to women veterans, we had no idea what a rich Pandora's box we were about to open. These are women following Bold Pursuits with sunshine on their shoulders, dreams in their eyes, and taking off for the clouds. Reading their brief stories of courage, commitment, devotion to duty and audacious achievements was truly an enriching and humbling experience. The stories of these women are diverse and awe-inspiring.

We believe that by sharing these stories, we can help create a more inclusive and equitable society for all. We can show the world that women are just as capable as men (if not more). They have also made significant contributions to the civilian world, seamlessly transitioning their skills and experiences into successful careers. The resilience they developed during their service has equipped them to excel in high-pressure environments, adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, and embrace leadership roles with confidence. As our stories will tell you, they have embraced professions ranging from being a commercial pilot, security, HR, Sales, Technology executives, Trainers, Psychologists, adventure junkies, academicians and much more. They are also champions of their communities, advocates for social change, and sources of inspiration for future generations. They have proved their mettle not just in India but across the nooks and corners of the world.

In this issue, through powerful interviews, personal narratives, and thought-provoking articles, we aim to honour their courage, resilience, and unwavering dedication. Let us be inspired by their stories, learn from their experiences, and commit ourselves to fostering a world where all individuals, regardless of gender, can thrive and succeed.

Thank you to all of the women warriors who have paved the way for us. We are grateful for your service and sacrifice. Together, let us stand alongside the women who have served as warriors and emerged as winners.



Humbly Yours,

Capt Rajesh Nair

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Foundation

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JOINT CERTIFICATION BY IIT GANDHINAGAR AND ISAC UNDER NSD BANNER

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The CCIO course was real eye opener on the various connotations in cybercrimes which can affect anyone. It gave tremendous knowledge in various aspects of cybercrimes and how as an individual I can help the society affected by cybercrimes in a better way. The guidance provided by Mr Sreeshankar and Gp Capt P A Naidu was immense during the course

Wg Cdr K Venugopal (Retd)



The ICBIS course has been excellent. Couldn't have asked for more. Murugappan sir as an instructor has been the best instructor I have been fortunate to be associated with. The course content is curated well. The interactive methodology was indeed very useful. Thank you for everything

Col Sanjay, Indian Army



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		Protein-1.4 g	2.8%
		Fat- 0 g	0%
		Fibre-3.16 g	2.9%
		Total carbohydrates-85 g	-
Mango	Mango pulp, Sugar, Liquid glucose, Acid regulator (E330), Stabilizing agent (E440), Class II preservative (E224)	Vitamin C-13 mg	17.9%
		Energy- 360 K cal	18%
		Protein-0.8 g	1.6%
		Fat- 0 g	0%
		Fibre-5.6 g	5.2%
Apple	Fruit pulp, sugar, liquid glucose, acid regulator (E330), stabilizing agent (E440), class II preservative (E224)	Total carbohydrates-96.5 g	-
		Vitamin C-25 mg	34.4%
		Energy-293.4 K cal	14.4%
		Protein- 1.15 g	2.3%
		Fat 0 g	0%
	Total carbohydrates-72.2 g	-	
	Total sugars-47 mg	-	
	Vitamin C-14 mg	19.17%	



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[A NOTE FOR THE READERS](#)

This is an interactive e-magazine with active links on many pages, including the advertisements, which can be used by just tapping or clicking on them.

For ease of providing feedback, such links have been provided at the end of the articles too.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within this e-magazine are the personal opinions of the authors and interviewees. Thus, the information and viewpoints presented in the articles do not represent those of Forces Network, and neither does Forces Network accept any duty or responsibility for them.

Expatriate Interview

In this series, we plan to showcase the achievements of the members of the Forces Network who have settled abroad and carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination. The aim is to bring to fore the mechanics of such transitions, and thereby quell the apprehensions of the larger community in the Network. Learning from each other would help us exploit our true potential in any part of the World. And, it could be beneficial for our families too.

IN INTERACTION WITH RAJESH NAIR

Lt Cdr Mansi Biswas was commissioned in the Indian Navy in January 1999. She has over 21 years of experience in the Information Security domain. She has ensured compliance with security processes across various phases of customer engagement through holistic governance, comprehensive risk management, and communication plan. She has extensive exposure to managing multi-functional teams across geographies. Developing IT/Infosec solutions for customers means aligning security architecture, plans, controls, processes, policies, and procedures with security standards and business goals.



Rajesh: Please let us know something about your background prior to joining the Armed Forces?

Mansi: Being the daughter of a Dy Cmdt in CISF and a Kendriya Vidyalaya alumni, I travelled across many states in India. In due course, I became an Engineer but had not planned to join the forces. A newspaper advertisement about 'Join the Navy' for women aspirants with a computer engineering background somehow attracted my attention, and I was enticed to go for my SSB interview in Bangalore. And the journey began.



Training on board a Ship

Rajesh: Please tell us about your military career. What were the experiences that defined you and what were important life lessons that the military taught you?

Mansi: My Navy career had diverse experiences and a lot of life lessons. I held two appointments as Assistant Manager Naval Dockyard Mumbai and Training Officer in INS Shivaji and had the following achievements:

- Developed and implemented IT solutions for improving operational productivity for the yard's infrastructure and processes. As-is analysis of existing workflows and proposed improvements for better productivity: MIS reporting, Dockyard refit status tracking, and overtime tracking system
- In charge of software and hardware in-house development, maintenance, and external procurement
- ISO 9002 implementation and certification: responsible for process documentation and external audit
- Awarded Commander-in-Chief Commendation, 2001 (Independence Day)
- Received the E-Governance Award for Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, for two consecutive years in 2001 and 2002 among all public sectors of India by the Computer Society of India (CSI)
- Conceptualization via a detailed screenplay based on the theme of History of the Indian Navy at the International Fleet Review (2001) with the Governor of Maharashtra as guest of honour. This was well received by the audience, and commendation was received for the articulation of the screenplay by the World Ship Trust
- Assisted Management in identifying naval training needs and thereby designing appropriate training programmes for recruits
- Designed and released the first day Cover by India Post for the diamond Jubilee of INS Shivaji and organised a Philatelic Exhibition for the same occasion

The lessons I learned from my seven years of Navy experience have been the backbone of my professional career. It taught me to take bold decisions and explore the unknown.

Rajesh: What was the impetus for you to leave the uniformed service so early in your military career?

Mansi: This is a tough Question to answer. My heart didn't want to leave, but my head dictated that I take the next bold step. Being Women officers, back in those days we were recruited as special induction (computer engineers) under the education branch. The aim was to deploy us for IT warfare projects, which later got delayed. Hence, after induction, our batch was asked to carry out the duties of education officers as their primary duty.



With Buddies in Training Academy

Rajesh: How was your Transition journey from the military to the civilian world? Any lessons that you may like to share with the military personnel contemplating a switch to the civil?

Mansi: Since the corporate culture is more business-oriented and has a flatter organisational structure than the Navy, it took me some time to learn and adapt to it. I would advise the officers who are thinking about transitioning to the business sphere to identify their key competencies and the type of work they are most passionate about. What I'm trying to say is that depending on your appointments, you can either work in HR, Purchase, Finance, Administration, or Project Management or any other business functions. You can choose one of the key sectors in the business world, showcase your talents, and advance quickly.



Training Academy

To join corporate, they like to see endorsements, so if you are planning to join as a project manager, get a PMP certification. If you want to join as a HR or Finance, executive MBAs can help. If you would like to join a field like mine in cyber security, get some industry certifications.

Rajesh: Please give us details about what you are presently engaged in your professional role and where are you based out of?

Mansi: I work as an Engagement Manager for Information Security consulting projects in the Banking and Finance domain. Earlier, I worked in the travel, transportation & Hospitality domains as well. I am currently based in Toronto, Canada.

Rajesh: What would be the top 3 things that transitioning military personnel need to unlearn as well as learn while seeking a successful corporate career?

Mansi: Unlearn the rigidity of rank hierarchy and update yourself with the latest trends in the industry. Update or upgrade your technology savviness, as whichever field you choose, it is a highly relevant and required skill set.

Rajesh: What are the challenges in relocating to another country and starting all over again? How did you overcome them? Any advice to others?

Mansi: This may sound odd, but I felt relocating to another country was similar to any movement we undertook as a transfer when you were in the military. It's like a drill. You have to get used to the new place and the new culture. Have absolute faith in yourself and your abilities.



While in Navy



With Parents

Rajesh: If you were to live your second career journey again would you do anything differently? What and why?

Mansi: My adventure has been gratifying overall. Throughout my career, I was able to establish a balance between work and life. I was able to live up to expectations on both a personal and professional level.

Rajesh: How has been your corporate journey so far? Are you satisfied?

Mansi: I've enjoyed my corporate work thus far, and I was able to pursue my career in infosec, which I found to be quite fulfilling.

Rajesh: What are your future plans going forward? Do you intend to come back to India or continue overseas?

Mansi: I intend to stay here till retirement while my kids finish their university education here.

Rajesh: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up similar corporate profile?

Mansi: As previously indicated, we are capable of stepping into any demanding duty because of our varied military backgrounds. Select a career path based on your level of comfort and desire for success. You may effectively enter the business world with good preparation.



With Family

Rajesh: Tell us more about your family? How important is family support in switching careers as well as moving abroad? You may like to illustrate with examples from your life?

Mansi: This is the most crucial requirement for both a prosperous job and going overseas. My family has consistently encouraged me in my pursuits.

Rajesh: Do you pursue any hobbies or interests? Tell us more about them?

Mansi: I like to paint to unwind. Although I never had the time to go for a formal training, I enjoy painting as a pastime. It aids with my relaxation.



Fun with Family

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor



The First Indian Women

Prime Minister - Indira Gandhi - 1966

Nobel Prize winner - Mother Teresa - 1979

President - Prathiba Patil - 2007

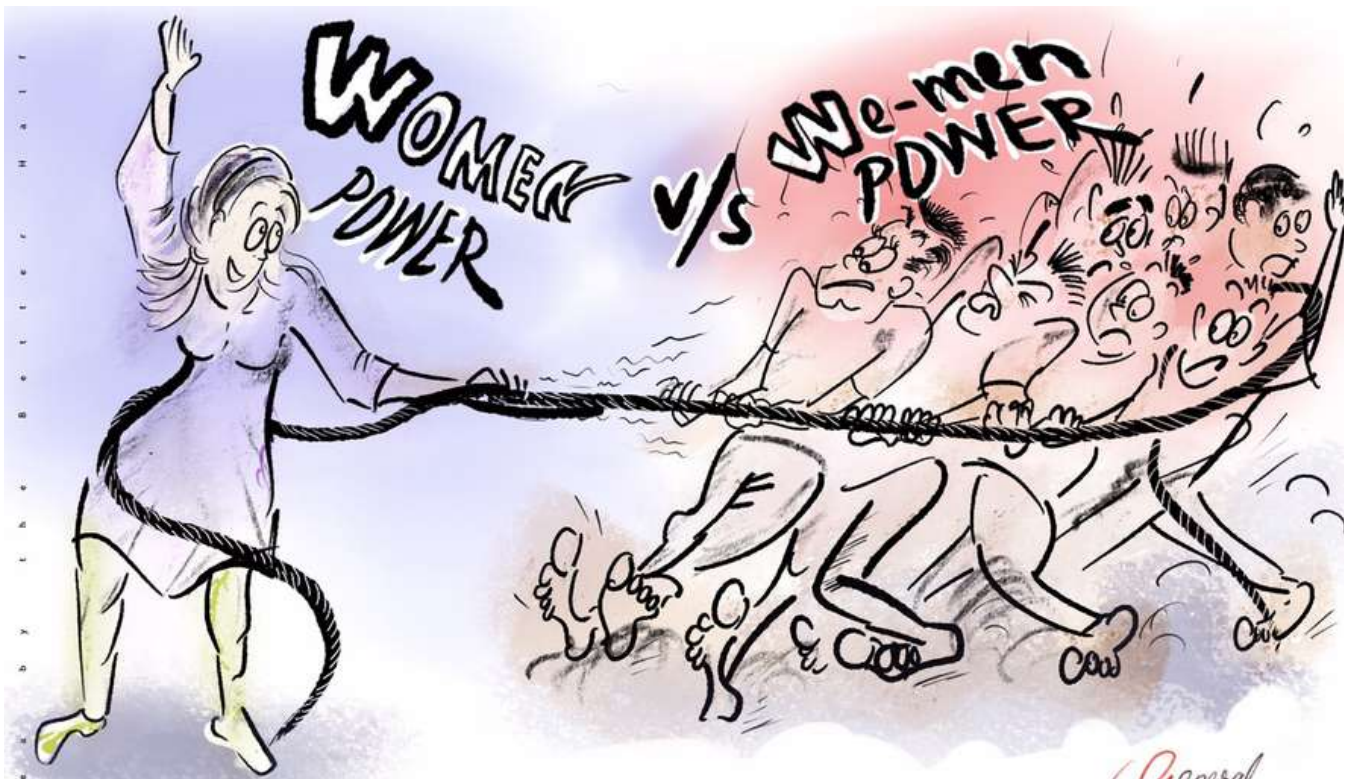
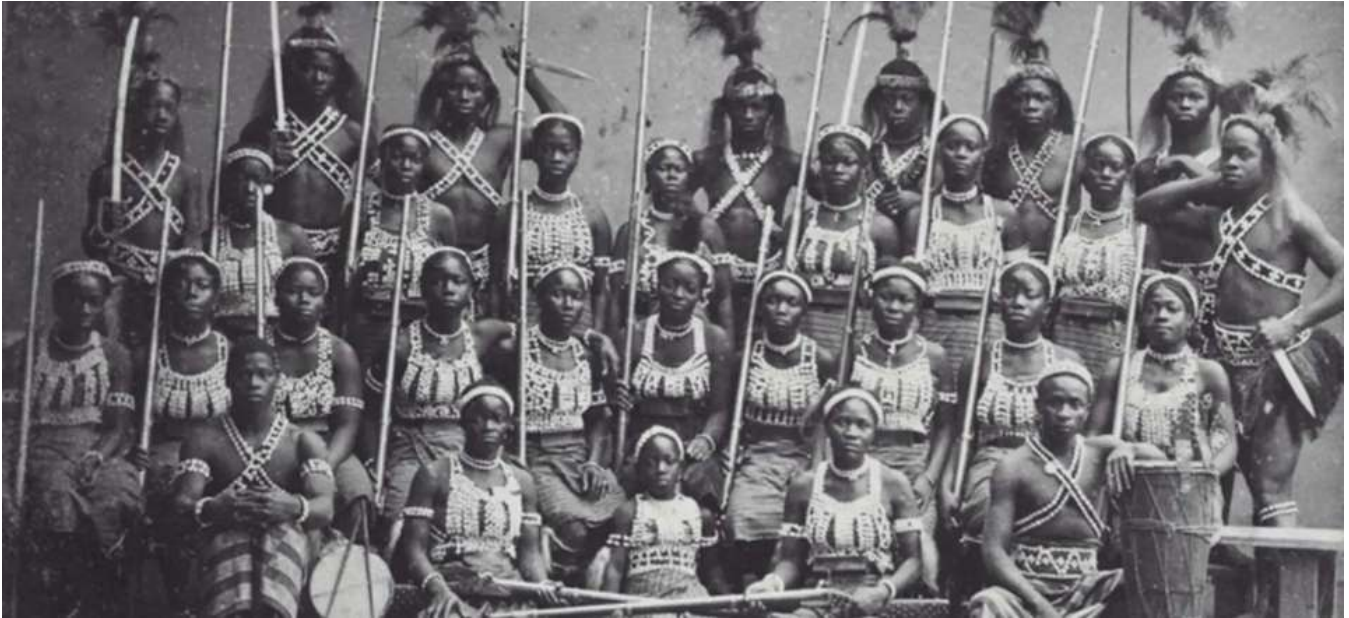
In Space - Kalpana Chawla - 1997

IPS - Kiran Bedi - 1972

Modern physician - Anandibai Gopalrao Joshi - 1887.



Dahomey women warriors, also known as Dahomey Amazons, mino, or ahosi, are women soldiers of the western African kingdom of Dahomey. In the Dahomeans' Fon language, they were called mino ("our mothers") or ahosi (wives of the king). When Europeans first encountered the kingdom's women soldiers, they called them Amazons, after the women warriors of Greek mythology.



Any guesses...?
Who is the **WINNER**...?

General Humour

ForceNetPreneur

In this series, we plan to showcase a few entrepreneurs who are members of the Forces Network and have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as well as learn from them with a view to motivating more members of our community to take up entrepreneurship as a full-time vocation. Finally, we do need job creators in greater numbers than job seekers.

IN INTERACTION WITH RAJESH NAIR

Maj Priyanka was commissioned into the Corp of Engineers, 65 Engineer Bridge Regiment (PMS), in March 2003 from OTA, Chennai. During her tenure, she held various appointments, including Coy Commander of a Bridge Company, Jt Dir (Architect) in the Military Engineer Service (MES), and Assistant Garrison Engineer (AGE). A qualified B-Arch post-Army Service, she has done an Executive Management Program from IIM Indore and an MBA (Operations) from IMT, Ghaziabad. She is a certified Green Building consultant as an IGBC AP (Indian Green Building Council Accredited Professional) and GRIHA CP (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment Certified Professional). She is also certified in Solar Photovoltaic Technology from IIT Bombay. She is the Co-Founder and Head of Marketing at VISOL Renewable Energy Solutions, a solar consulting and EPC (Engineering Procurement and Construction) Company providing turnkey solutions for solar power plants and promoting clean and green energy. All three founding members of this company are women.



Rajesh: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Armed Forces? And your subsequent journey in Indian Army?

Priyanka: I'm from Bokaro Steel City, Jharkhand, and completed my schooling at Delhi Public School there. My father was working with Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), and we also had a family business in consumer goods dealerships. My mother was a homemaker. After finishing my schooling at Delhi Public School, Bokaro, I went to do my Bachelor in Architecture at Gulbarga. On completion of my degree, I started practicing in New Delhi when I saw the advertisement in the newspaper for the short-service commission. I applied and got selected on my first attempt.

After my training at the Officers Training Academy, I was commissioned into the 65 Engineer Bridge Regiment of the Bengal Engineering Group. We call ourselves Bengal Sappers. Our Regiment was specialized in making floating PMS (Pontoon Mostini Superva) bridges over water obstacles during operations to give access to our fighting forces. I was also trained for all other combat Engineering tasks like Mining, demining, and demolition at the College of Military Engineering, Pune.

My battalion was based at Ambala Cantt, and I served in various appointments like Platoon commander, Quarter Master, FE/IO and, in a major part, as officiating Company Commander leading my Bridge company of approx. 200 soldiers participated in the Strike Corps War Exercises. Being an officiating company commander as a young Captain was a huge responsibility and my greatest experience. I served with three commanding Officers for almost four years in the regiment and held the appointments of Quarter Master and FE/IO too, getting exposure to logistics and other aspects. Being in the regiment, I got the opportunity to be part of a flood relief operation, do a mountaineering course, and take a short staff course designed especially for lady officers.

Later, I served as Joint Director Architect at Chief Engineer (Air Force) Bangalore, a Military Engineer Service (MES) zonal office, where I got the opportunity to utilize my architectural skills. We were handling the design of buildings for the two Commands of the Air Force. I was involved in the design of the infrastructure for LCA Tejas at Sulur. My third and last posting was as Assistant Garrison Engineer (B/R) at Lucknow, which exposed me to the executive side of maintenance and execution of defence infrastructure projects.

Rajesh: If I have to ask you about that moment when your heart said that it was time and I wanted to start my own venture, could you please tell us more about it?

Priyanka: Being from a business family, I was always keen on the idea of starting a business. While I was posted in Bangalore, I attempted the GMAT twice to pursue my MBA program and applied to various reputed institutes. But moving out of service seemed difficult then. After my release from the Army service, I completed my 6-month executive Management program from IIM Indore and later started PGDM (Distance Learning) from IMT Ghaziabad. I didn't take up a job at IIM Indore placements as I decided to join my husband (a Merchant Navy Captain) for sailing. I wanted to start my career in a technical field and tried getting a job as an architect, but due to a lack of relevant experience, it didn't happen. After getting to know about Green buildings, I did IGBC, GRIHA Green Building Certification and started a green building consultancy as a free lancer in 2011. Green Buildings are energy-efficient buildings, and working on that gave me exposure to solar power plants. I was excited about the idea of solar energy and its future prospects and decided to venture into it.



During my sailing from Australia to Japan with my husband



At IIT Bombay in 2016 with Aparna Kshirsagar and Jyoti Prakash, my Partners

Rajesh: Please tell us about your entrepreneurial venture? What was the vision behind starting your venture, and thereafter expanding it?

Priyanka: Our Company's name is Visol Renewable Energy Solutions. It is coined by joining two Latin words, Vis (which means energy) and Sol (which means Sun). So it means 'Energy of the Sun'. We are a Solar Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Company and provide turnkey solutions for solar power plants, mostly on rooftops. I have two Partners who are my schoolmates with whom I reunited in 2015 in Mumbai, a year after we shifted here. **Jyoti Prakash** is a telecom engineer, and she operates from Pune. **Aparna Kshirsagar** has completed her MSc and is here at Mumbai. We have an in-house engineering team with a total team experience of 30 MW.

The purpose of VISOL is 'to be a catalyst in making India a developed nation' by providing energy security, which is one of the essential requirements for development. Our Vision is 'to be the most trusted name in India for quality solar solutions.' After an initial phase where we worked in collaboration with a few companies, we started expanding our team in 2020 as we wanted to have an in-house team to give the best service to our customers.

Rajesh: Why Solar related business? Why did you risk getting into a business whose future was not know?

Priyanka: While consulting as a Green Building consultant, I realized how solar energy can reduce the energy requirement, electricity cost, and carbon footprint of a building. The concept of solar energy at that time in 2015 was relatively new, but I saw the future of the technology with the ongoing climate change crisis.

Even the Government started promoting the solar business, encouraging Entrepreneurs to explore the field. It all started with my idea getting manifested with a course advertised by the Ministry of MSME on 'How to get into the Business of Solar Energy? Subsequently, I got myself trained at IIT Bombay for the design and hands-on installation of solar power plants. Yes, it was a risk, but to be frank, I did not do too much due diligence and just went with passion for the technology, which is adding value to the world at large apart from just being a business.

And as we wished, the world over, renewable energy and its adoption gained momentum, and today we are talking about India being net zero by 2070 and setting an ambitious target of 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030, where solar energy is going to be more than 60%. So the Sun is shining for us!



My partners and school buddies

Rajesh: What are the top 3 business opportunities that you are working on?

Priyanka: At the moment, we are primarily focused on providing turnkey solutions for solar rooftop power plants for factories and institutions. With the government's emphasis on Solar rooftops and increased awareness, there's a lot of enthusiasm among consumers.

We are also exploring aggressively marketing the operation Maintenance of the existing solar power plants, considering that India now has the 2nd largest installed solar Power plant capacity in the world. We are already maintaining our own Solar plants, so extending and expanding this opportunity is what we are looking at. We are also looking at providing solar products and solutions for the export market, especially for Africa and the Middle East, where there is a huge demand for off-grid solar products and solutions. We are in talks with some stakeholders about the same.



Inaguration of Soalr project at Gandhi Bal Mandir School

Rajesh: For your entrepreneurial journey, could you please share some of the biggest highs and lows?

Priyanka: Although there are many highs and lows of the entrepreneurial journey, my biggest high, I would say, is the day when we bagged our first project independently in 2018. It was a small project, and we completed it in just 7 days. The project was for a charitable school in Mumbai. Of course, later I also got the opportunity to represent the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (MACCIA) on a delegation to Nagaland invited by the Governor of Nagaland.

Entrepreneurship is a roller coaster ride; there have been many lows too. I think COVID was one of the toughest phases for many, and we were part of it too. With almost no work at hand, we utilized this time to increase our digital presence and create collaborations, and we are getting the results now. I can say that we reinvented our marketing strategy during COVID.



Felicitation for installation of a Solar Project in Gadge Maharaj Charitable School



With Hon Governor of Nagaland, Sh Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya



Felicitation by Indian Institute of Architects on Women's Day 2023 *Interacting with students at Aditya Institute of Management on Entrepreneurship*

Rajesh: How difficult was it to break the stereotypes of women in business? and that too is solar-related?

Priyanka: With my background in the Armed Forces, which makes you ready for any challenge, in a buzzing city like Mumbai and a growing start-up environment, I would say it was not challenging being a woman in business. The challenges were more or less the same as they are for any start-up or business.

Yes, there are very few women in the Solar EPC business, but for me, climbing on a rooftop and getting the solar plant installed was not a challenge, as I was trained for making combat bridges and many other combat engineering tasks. Some people were skeptical sometimes, but that would always be there, and it's on us to prove them wrong.



Collaboration with Dimapur Chamber of Commerce as part of MACCIA Delegation



With Team Visol

Rajesh: Tell us more about your team?

Priyanka: At the moment, we have an in-house team of eight people. It includes three Partners and five employees, mostly engineers in various roles. The in-house team takes care of marketing, sales, and project Design and execution. We also have a HR consultant and a digital marketing consultant on board. For actual installation on site, we have various Installation and commissioning teams. We also have an extended sales associate group called Visol Green Energy Partners (VGEP), which helps us reach out to a larger audience. The concept of VGEP was coined during the COVID lockdown, when we did a number of webinars and training programs to get associated with professionals and businesses who were keen to join the solar sector without having a team of their own. I'm also a member of various business groups like Business Network International (BNI), Rotary Means Business Fellowship (RMB), Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (MACCIA), Indian Chamber of International Business (ICIB), etc. They are all my extended team.



Taking over as Director- Vocational for Rotary Club of Mumbai Ghatkopar

Rajesh: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow Forces Network members who want to take up entrepreneurship?

Priyanka: To all who would want to take up Entrepreneurship, I would just say to follow your passion. If you really want to do something, don't wait to regret at the end of your life that you didn't even try to attempt it. There is no dearth of resources. You just have to start and rest, and everything will fall into place. It's not an easy journey, but everything has its own share of ups and downs. We need to have a lot of perseverance to keep working toward our goals.

And one thing I realized is that if you're entering a new sector, it's always better to gain some years of experience before venturing into it, unlike me, who jumped into the water and then learned to swim. Nevertheless, as they say, 'the secret of getting ahead is getting started.'

Rajesh: What are your future plans going forward?

Priyanka: At the moment, we are looking at growing our footprint in the Industrial and institutional segments and expanding our portfolio in solar rooftop projects by 2025. We are looking at EV charging solutions and expanding into the export market.

Rajesh: Do you have any hobbies, how do you make time for the same?

Priyanka: I like reading, especially current affairs and business management books. Also listening to music. I started running marathons in 2016 (although I wasn't a great runner at the Officer's Training Academy) after coming to Mumbai and enjoying it. I'm part of the Pinkathon running group at Ghatkopar, and I have done a half marathon. I also enjoy contributing to social causes, especially for women and youth. I joined the Rotary Club of Mumbai Ghatkopar in 2017 and have been active since then. I was the Secretary of the Club in 2019 and have also held various positions in Rotary District 3141 since then. This year, I'm the Director of Vocational Projects in the Club and represent Public Image Avenue at Rotary District 3141 in Mumbai.

For managing all this, I would say it's the support system around me, which includes my husband, Priyaneet, and my Partners. Also, my team at home and at work helps me focus on both my work and my play.

I would also love to explore politics in the future, as I feel our parliamentary system needs more people like all of us to make it more meaningful.



Rajesh: What has been the role of your family in your professional journey?

Priyanka: I realised after my SSB that whatever we are is because of our family and the upbringing we have had. So I give all credit to my parents for shaping my personality. The atmosphere in my city and in my family was very encouraging for pursuing education and a career. There was never a point in my life where I stopped to do something. My father himself is very enterprising and a self-made man. My mother was very outgoing and had great PR skills, I would say. My parents and brothers were always there for me. They have invested in the company. My husband, Priyaneet, is my biggest support in my entrepreneurial journey. He is a Merchant Navy Captain and is now working with ONGC in Mumbai. He is always there to support me, especially with my children.



My Family my Strength

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor



Ahilyabai Holkar was born on May 31st, 1725 in Gram Chundi, Maratha Empire. She is regarded as one of the finest female rulers in Indian history. She spread the message of dharma and promoted industrialisation in the 18th century. After the death of her husband and father-in-law, she ruled Malwa in a wise and sagacious manner. On various occasions, she led the army herself from the front like a brave warrior, armed with bows and arrows on the elephant. It is said that during her reign, Malwa was never once attacked and remained an oasis of stability and peace



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Women Power

Spouses/Daughters of Defence Officers as well as those who have donned the uniform, have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such women of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS

Capt Dr Dinisha Bhardwaj Singh is from the first batch of lady officers in the Army. She had been a consultant, leadership and motivational trainer and content creator with various organisations in India. She had been a research associate at NEHU for SSA in East Khasi Hills, Shillong, while doing her PhD and was also associated with NERIE Umiam Meghalaya, for the review of the Nagaland Board Class 10 Syllabus. She has headed Army school in Shillong, IVN Indore, and Velocity Delhi and been head of school and project director at GIIIS Indore and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for 8 years. She also worked with All India Radio in Shillong. She is on the board of various organisations.



Uday: Please tell us about yourself and what you do?

Dinisha: I am the proud army officer of the first batch of entries for lady officers in the Indian Army. I am currently an Educationist and just shifted to India after a wonderful and enriching 'tajurbe' of 5 years in Malaysia.

Uday: What is it that inspired you to embark on the journey of imparting Knowledge in the field of education?

Dinisha: Honestly, it came my way as plan B but yes, I was associated with educational administration by being in the Army Educational Corps. Once I joined in, it became my passion.

Uday: We all have mentors and guides in our professional world and they are a great influence, could you please tell us about them from your life ?

Dinisha: Yes indeed.... For me, I call myself a lifelong learner and student. To me, my influences were my parents, Dr. Mitter Sen and Mrs. Mohini, my school physics teacher, Satish Pandey sir, and each one who met me at one point or another.



Uday: What's your biggest source(s) of inspiration?

Dinisha: Each breath is a source of motivation for me to do more, achieve more, and give back. I would like to sum it up like this: every achievement makes me happy but makes me more dissatisfied to get more.

Uday: As an Army Officer, the Army life must have had an influence on your choices as you traveled and grew in personal and professional life. Could you please tell us more about the Fauji aspect of your life journey?

Dinisha: Being fauji is being true human. I sometimes refer to my blood group as Olive Green. I strongly believe every citizen of India should serve in the military for some time. The words are not enough to explain what being fauji means. One has to walk the lane.



Uday: Would you like to share the details of your journey after Fauj and how it all started?

Dinisha: It just started... On it's on.. I attempted a PhD at NEHU Shillong and got it on scholarship. In parallel, I was supporting various educational organisations in Punjab, Delhi, and Shillong, besides being the leadership and motivational trainer and casual announcer at All India Radio Shillong. Then the magnetism of education pulled me to the very core of it.

Uday: Could you please tell us more about the research you carried out in your field?

Dinisha: Well, if it is my PhD, then it was on scientific attitude and scientific aptitude. Besides this, I have conducted many action research projects to add value in the field of education.

Uday: How has been the journey so far and any stories of great remembrance and significance you wish to share with us?

Dinisha: It's been an excellent one. There are a lot many stories but in general I had almost 100% satisfaction level with my parents, and to top it all, the most satisfying is when you influence lives and people come and share the achievements with warmth and gratitude.

Other than having the privilege of being from the first batch of lady officers in the Army, I also had the following achievements:

- First Lady officer to be posted in IMA Dehra Dun,
- First Lady officer to be in Punch, J&K
- First to do a camel expedition with the Army on the Pak border,
- First to do a paragliding course and a rock climbing course with the Army,
- The only one to do 70 km of whitewater rafting along with British army officers and cadets of Sandhurst Academy UK
- Privileged to be in the Limca book of word records along with a bunch of lady officers from my course.
- First Lady Officer to be the ADC of the Commandant of IMA
- Bike and car rallies with the army and civil organizations.
- Delivered leadership trainings to chains of schools in Singapore, India, Japan, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Cambodia, Vietnam, Macao, and Bali.
- Headed and accomplished two major policy structures and projects, namely the Sports Academy and Safety and Security, and was a core committee member of Global Trainings for 35 schools in the previous chain.
- I had been a trainer with IGCSE and CBSE on general learning attitudes, pedagogy, learning outcomes, etc. to impart F2F (before COVID) and online trainings.
- I have co-created two manuals, namely, PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP and CONDUCIVE LEARNING, out of which pedagogical leadership was created in collaboration with the National Institute of Planning and Administration (NIEPA) in Delhi, which was selected as the book on which all the CBSE principals were to be trained, so she was part of the core committee of six leaders to select and train the master trainers from Principals across the globe.
- Has presented papers in national and International seminars and webinars, moderated, and hosted multiple sessions at the global level.
- I have also worked with All India Radio in Shillong.
- I am on the boards of various organisations as an international advisor.
- Proud recipient of six medals from the armed forces and 14 awards from various organisations across the globe for contributions in the field of education and in general through society.
- Had been a research associate at NEHU for SSA in East Khasi Hills, Shillong.
- Was also associated with NERIE Umiam Meghalaya for the review of the Nagaland Board Class 10 Syllabus.
- An adventure freak who enjoyed horse riding, squash, badminton, six-aside hockey, and Golf too.

Uday: Being a Teacher you must be witnessing vast changes in the field of education, what are your thoughts?

Dinisha: Well, though I have never been a teacher in the literal sense, being an education administrator, I can say that "Change is the only thing that is inevitable." One should be ready to flow with it, but always remember that the base should be strong.

Uday: Any other challenges you faced so far on the way to establishing yourself and how you challenged those challenges?

Dinisha: Challenges could never dare to challenge me as I always moulded them to the opportunities

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Join us on

POWERED BY

Uday: Live in the present moment and/or Plan for the future? What's your mantra?

Dinisha: I agree and would like to just tweak it a bit.

"Just be best in your present and keep your goals clear like Arjun looking into the eye of a fish. Your GOAL WILL WALK UP to YOU".

Uday: Lessons learnt as the world transitions through one of the most challenging times?

Dinisha:

Unless There is a challenge, there is no progress.
Each challenge is an opportunity, and
Each challenge brings the best out of us.

Uday: Would you like to mention about the Family support you received on this journey?

Dinisha: Family support is very important for all to grow and flourish in life. Unfortunately, I did not have that as I lost my parents before time and my in-laws had their own limitations, but that made me strong, and of course, my husband and the Almighty were always there with me.



Uday: Tell us more about your family.

Dinisha: I am married to Brajesh Singh, who is an officer with the Central Police Organisation and we have two daughters. The elder one is Aeshana Singh, who is soon completing her graduation and going to be an advocate, and the younger daughter is Aadya Singh, who is in 10th grade.



Uday: As an aspiring and confident woman in the World of academia, How's your experience? 5 Leadership Qualities that Women bring on The table?

Dinisha: I can say that not only in academia but in the army and other fields of life, my experiences have been amazing, as I honestly lived the challenges.

Five qualities women bring on table are:

1. Best management
2. Connect
3. Special care
4. The best out of worst
5. Best administration

I would like to add reason to it. My fraternity kindly pardon me:

A MAN GETS ACCEPTED IN THE SYSTEM AND PROVES HIMSELF, WHILE A WOMAN FIRST PROVES HERSELF AND GETS ACCEPTED. So she brings all this to the table in a better package.

Uday: Most importantly, what is the best thing you love about your Domain of education, studies, and research?

Dinisha: I love everything where I can make a difference in people's lives.



Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor



Captain Lakshmi Sahgal was born as Lakshmi Swaminathan on October 24, 1914, in Anakkara, Madras Presidency, British India. She was a revolutionary in the Indian independence movement, an officer in the Indian National Army, and also the Minister of Women's Affairs in the Azad Hind government. She was the commander of Rani Jhansi Regiment. She is commonly referred to in India as Captain Lakshmi. It was a reference to her rank when taken prisoner in Burma during the Second World War.

Women Power

Spouses/Daughters of Defence Officers as well as those who have donned the uniform, have immense potential as individuals. While many of them have already established themselves as successful independent entities, a very large number still has to recognise and exploit their inherent hidden capabilities and worth. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such women of the members of Forces Network who have carved a niche for themselves through hard work, grit and determination, so as to provide adequate motivation to the others.

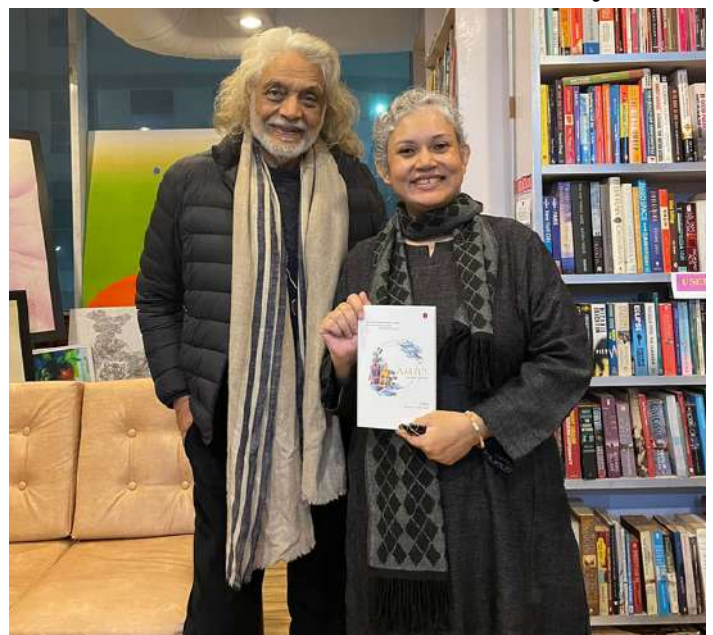
IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS

Ms Sahana Ahmed is a poet, novelist, and peacebuilder. She is the Managing Trustee of the VTRN Global Foundation and the Founder of Bare Bones Publishing. Her writings have appeared in leading international publications such as The New York Times, The Times of India, The Hindu, Business Line, and Outlook India. *Combat Skirts*, her debut novel, is a coming-of-age story set in an army girls' hostel against the backdrop of the Kargil War. For her work in the social sector, she was conferred the Woman of the Decade award at the annual global Women Economic Forum in 2022.



Uday: What is it that inspired you to embark on the journey of imparting knowledge in the field of literature, social good and education?

Sahana: My work as a social activist originated from the visibility I had as an author. One of the major themes in my work has been women supporting women, and when I was invited to establish and lead a council for WICCI (Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), I did not hesitate. It was a fruitful tenure and led to my appointment as the India Country Chair of the World Peace Wing of G100. I got to work closely with the Founder and President, Dr. Harbeen Arora Rai, and Ms. Ouided Bouchamaoui, Nobel Peace laureate 2015. I used the platforms to start a Responsible Tourism campaign for schoolchildren called Green Buddies and to publish a collection of peace poetry, *Amity*. I have worked with leading universities as a Life Skills trainer, and I plan to continue contributing to peace literature through my new venture, Bare Bones Publishing.



With filmmaker and artist Muzaffar Ali at the launch of my book Amity



Panel discussion at a Lit Fest

Uday: We all have mentors and guides in our professional world and they are a great influence, could you please tell us about them from your life?

Sahana: When I first started writing, I was fortunate to have received great encouragement and support from writer and literary critic Prof. Amit Chaudhuri. I consider him an inspiration.

Uday: Would you like to share the details of your journey and how it all started?

Sahana: I have had two parallel tracks in my writing journey. At the very beginning of my career, I was accepted by prestigious literary magazines, such as the journal of the International Flash Fiction Association, published by the University of Chester. Since the acceptance rates of such publications range below five percent, it was reassuring as a beginner. Zeenat Aman... was written for a contest, and I was the only finalist to receive a book deal. I have had great luck, to be honest. So, I dabble in both serious and commercial literature. However, I have stayed away from content creation and blogging.



At the Women Economic Forum with my award

Uday: As an Army kid and then as an Army Officer's wife, the Army life must have had an influence in your choices as you travelled and grew in personal and professional life. Could you please tell us more about the Fauji aspect of your life journey?

Sahana: My upbringing has had a profound impact on me culturally, and that includes my work ethics. Interfaith harmony and syncretism came naturally to the Army kids of my generation. The itinerant lifestyle of studying in a dozen schools across India meant I had no choice but to learn to adapt. Studying Hospitality and then pursuing a career in Learning and Development were also extensions of the ease I had with Soft Skills. Later, when I decided to pursue writing seriously, my greatest success came from a short story based on a Special Train. It was called Zeenat Aman Is Not a Soldier. Telling stories about the quirks and eccentricities of Fauji life was my ticket to being a novelist.

Uday: Being an author, mentor and educator, you must be witnessing vast changes in the field of literature and culture in general, what are your thoughts?

Sahana: I have had great exposure to how books are made and marketed because I was forced to learn how things work behind the scenes. Even though I was published traditionally, the platform—an app on Airtel by Juggernaut—was unconventional. I am also curious, so I could sense it when the literary scene opened up in terms of trends and accessibility. Indian writers are doing pathbreaking work, and it won't be long before they become popular names. I am very lucky that I get to be a part of this change and can contribute to it. Yes, social media and sites like Pratilipi have led to more writers than readers, but serious practitioners of the craft will persevere. I hope the industry works on how books are distributed and sold, though. There is scope for improvement there. Also, I hope opportunities in screenwriting and ghostwriting mean that writers overall are valued more. In most cases, writers are not paid at all. I once tweeted that the publishing industry in India runs on vanity and charity. Most people agreed with me.



With fellow writers at a Gurugram hotel



Being interviewed by Humra Quraishi at India Habitat Centre

Being felicitated by AWWA President Mrs. Archana Pande

Uday: Any other challenges you faced so far on the way to establishing yourself and how you challenged those challenges?

Sahana: Writing does not pay my bills, but the greater challenge was one of perception. My publisher did not handle my debut book well in terms of packaging and promotions, so those who hadn't read it could not understand how or why it was on bestseller lists. I am known for sharp, experimental writing, but I have always maintained that *Combat Skirts* is my best work in terms of technique and creativity. I wish more people gave it a chance.

Uday: Live in the present moment and/or plan for the future? What's your mantra?

Sahana: Both. I compartmentalise and prioritise and that is how I am able to juggle multiple roles. Right now, I am curating and editing five books, apart from working for the education rights of Afghan girls and highlighting the achievements of women for three organisations based in India, the UK, and the USA. I have started a new company and am onboard with two more. Plus, I have my personal writing projects and am a mom to a twelve-year-old. I have a crazy schedule, but at the end of the day, I make sure I have no unread emails.



At Abhivyakti II

Uday: Lessons learnt as the world transitions through one of the most challenging times?

Sahana: That technology is a boon, not a bane. How we go forward is in our hands. Do we innovate and empower, or do we while away our time watching cat videos? Also, it's time we really started respecting nature. Climate change is the greatest threat of our time.

Uday: Would you like to mention about the family support you received on this journey?

Sahana: My husband, Shakil, is my biggest cheerleader. He supported my decision to give up well-paying assignments to pursue writing full-time. Our daughter was five when I started my first book. He took care of everything for almost a year, and I could focus on my story without any guilt. I have a back problem, so he drives me to events, carries my bags, and stays in the background. For someone who is as accomplished as he is, he has no ego playing secondfiddle to me. I dedicated *Combat Skirts* to him.



Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Interview, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor



Menstrual cramps during a women's menses can be just as painful as suffering from a heart attack. This condition is known as Dysmenorrhea which millions of women suffer from every month.

Author of the Month

Sajita Nair

IN INTERACTION WITH RAJESH NAIR

Capt Sajita Nair is from the Army Ordnance Corps. She was among the first few women officers to be commissioned in the Indian Army. After her army tenure, she was an HR professional before she took up writing and mentoring. Apart from reading and writing, she enjoys traveling, the outdoors and nature. She lives in Bengaluru with her Naval submariner husband and two children. She has published novels, short stories, travelogues and essays. Her debut bestselling novel, 'She's a Jolly Good Fellow', about women officers in the Indian army, was well received. She has also authored 'The Army Officer's Wife', and 'The Search'.



Rajesh: What inspired you to start writing?

Sajita: I have always enjoyed reading. With a love for the written word, it was only a natural progression towards writing, starting with snippets, blogs, articles, travelogues and essays. When my work got published in national publications, encouraged by my family and friends, I wrote a novel based on my experiences as one of the first few women officers in the Indian army. At the book pitch contest of the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Mumbai, I pitched my book idea and eventually it was published as 'She's a Jolly Good Fellow' by Hachette India. Later, I worked with Juggernaut Books and Readomania to publish short stories and novels. The love from readers is what inspires me to continue telling stories.

Rajesh: What inspired you to write on this unique theme?

Sajita: Most societies in the world are patrilineal and patriarchal. So, when I learned that the Nairs of Kerala are one of the few matrilineal societies, I was curious to understand more about how this system came into being and thrived at one point in history. This curiosity, coupled with my own understanding and nostalgia of life in a tharavad (ancestral house where joint families lived), inspired me to write a story on this unique theme.



Army Days

Rajesh: You have already written a few books more related to the forces. Why did you choose to write about a matrilineal society (one of the few in the world)?

Sajita: My books set in the armed forces were inspired by my completely fauji background. My father was an Air Force officer; I myself served in the army, and my husband served as a Naval submariner. Although I have written some fauji themed books and have others planned for the future, this story of a matrilineal tharavad in transition has been at the back of my mind for quite some time. Hence, I undertook this project and attempted to tell a story that is culturally important, historically relevant, and emotionally engaging.

Rajesh: How do you gather ideas for writing a book on such a different topic?

Sajita: To understand more about the matrilineal system followed in Kerala, I read books such as 'The Malabar Manual' by William Logan, 'Nair' by Raghu Palat, 'The Ivory Throne' by Manu Pillai, 'Naalukettu' by MT Vasudevan Nair, and a plethora of articles related to life, tradition, and customs in joint families. From elders in my family, I tried to understand the mindset and aspirations to create believable characters as society transitioned from marumakka-thayam (inheritance through nieces and nephews) to modern-day nuclear homes. When most agents and publishers rejected my book proposal, I edited and rewrote the manuscript many times over in various versions until it was finally accepted and published.

Rajesh: What is your process for creative writing? How do you go about writing a book? Tell us about how you went about writing your latest book.

Sajita: A book starts with an idea. Once the idea grips me, I begin to think of the plot, atmosphere, and characters. I write them down in longhand and develop a synopsis of the plot while also creating well-rounded characters with their own unique character traits. As I write, changes happen along the way as the story begins to take form. Once I'm done with the first draft, editing and rewriting begin. When the manuscript becomes presentable, I have someone read it (usually my husband), and based on the input received, I rewrite, edit, or delete part. Only after many edits is a manuscript ready to be sent to a literary agent or publisher.



With My Spouse

Rajesh: How did being in the forces help you write?

Sajita: All of us who have served in the armed forces have stories within us that come from our multitude of experiences and exploration of new places, cultures, and people. Being pushed out of our comfort zones not only helps us understand ourselves and the world better but also connects us deeply with total strangers, who become friends for life. For me too, the plethora of experiences of being an Air Force Officer's daughter, an army officer, and the wife of a naval officer enriched my life and inspired me on a journey towards writing.

Rajesh: What are your future plans? Please tell us about that.

Sajita: I plan to write more books and also continue with my training and mentoring career. As a submariner's wife, I have immense respect for the Dolphins and hope to write about them. I'd also like to try writing satire and humour as I have often received praise for tackling elements of humour in my novel 'She's a Jolly Good Fellow.'



Family picture

Rajesh: What is your message to all those people who plan to write a book but never really take up the effort to do so?

Sajita: From the creative writing workshops that I've conducted, I have learned that for most people, the very thought of writing a book can seem daunting. Some others start off with fervour, lose direction along the way, and languish with half-written manuscripts. I would suggest starting with a synopsis, a short, two-page summary that gives an overview of the plot, the characters, and the tone and style of your story. With a synopsis, anytime you confront a writer's block, you can always refer back to it and find your way forward. Also, a peaceful space without distractions would help you tune in to your thoughts and imagination. Like most other professions, perseverance is key. Keep at it, follow a workable schedule, and in the end, you will have your own book to hold!



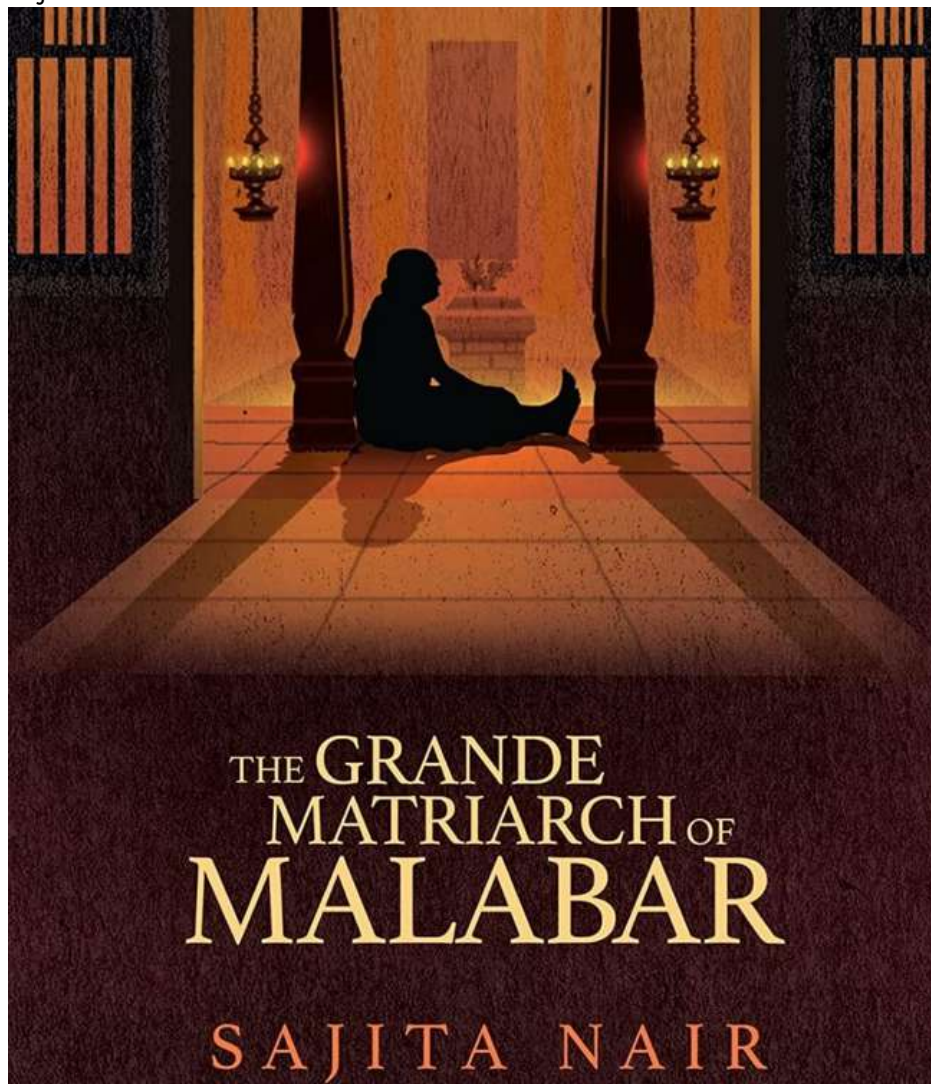
River rafting with daughter



Corporate work pic

Rajesh: Could you please give me a synopsis of the book?

Sajita: Here is the blurb of the book: - How far will you go to hold on to your heritage? Is the house more important than the people who live in it? Dakshayani Amma, the grande dame of matrilineal Kalyedath, must ensure its longevity, but having a differently abled daughter jeopardises her hope of becoming an heiress. As her challenge turns into an obsession, she disregards her well-wishers and overlooks the stakes. But there is a price to pay. When Rohini visits India from the US, she has only one objective in mind: the sale of the Kalyedath tharavad bequeathed to her. But when unexplained hurdles befall her, she is forced to visit the past. How are the two women's lives intertwined? What happens to the tharavad? Does it become a relic like the traditional joint families?



Book name : The Grande Matriarch of Malabar

Publishers : Readomania (02 Jun 2023)

Available on: Amazon

Price : Rs.399/- (purchase price)

Link : https://www.amazon.in/Grande-Matriarch-Malabar-Sajita-Nair/dp/9391800483/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=the+grande+matriarch+of+malabar&qid=1688921146&srefix=the+grande%2Caps%2C239&sr=8-1

**Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on the book, on the Website-
Editor**

Moment In Time

This photography section, "Moment in Time" provides an outlet for the creative side of our esteemed members. The rules for submission are as follows:

1. Forces Network members, spouses and their wards can submit images for publication.
2. No nudity or porn.
3. No mention of Mil establishments, unit identity, tac numbers or tail numbers.
4. It's a photography section, so no images of various get-togethers and social functions will be published.
5. The longer side of image should be 2048 pixels.
6. Maximum of five images will be published every month. The images must be submitted by the 20th of every month.
7. Mention your Instagram ID.
8. **While submitting, the following details should be submitted along with the suitable Title:**
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 - e. Lens
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 - g. In the case of a mobile click, the same may be mentioned.

All Photos may please be sent to forcesnetworkz@gmail.com by 20th of every month.



Dassam falls Ranchi, at it's peak - By Capt Rina Malik



Shimla Skies- By Col BS Rai



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Dhoop Chaon- By Col BS Rai



Super Flower- By Col BS Rai

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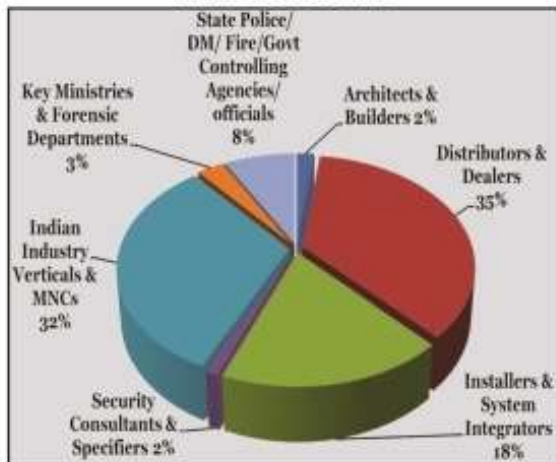
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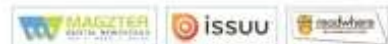
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Book Review

The Courage To Be Disliked

BY *ICHIRO KISHIMI & FUMITAKE KAGA*

About The Author:

Ichiro Kishimi was born in Kyoto, where he currently resides. He writes and lectures on Adlerian psychology and provides counseling for youths in psychiatric clinics as a certified counselor and consultant for the Japanese Society of Adlerian Psychology. He is the translator, into Japanese, of selected writings by Alfred Adler—The Science of Living and Problems of Neurosis—and he is the author of Introduction to Adlerian Psychology, in addition to numerous other books.



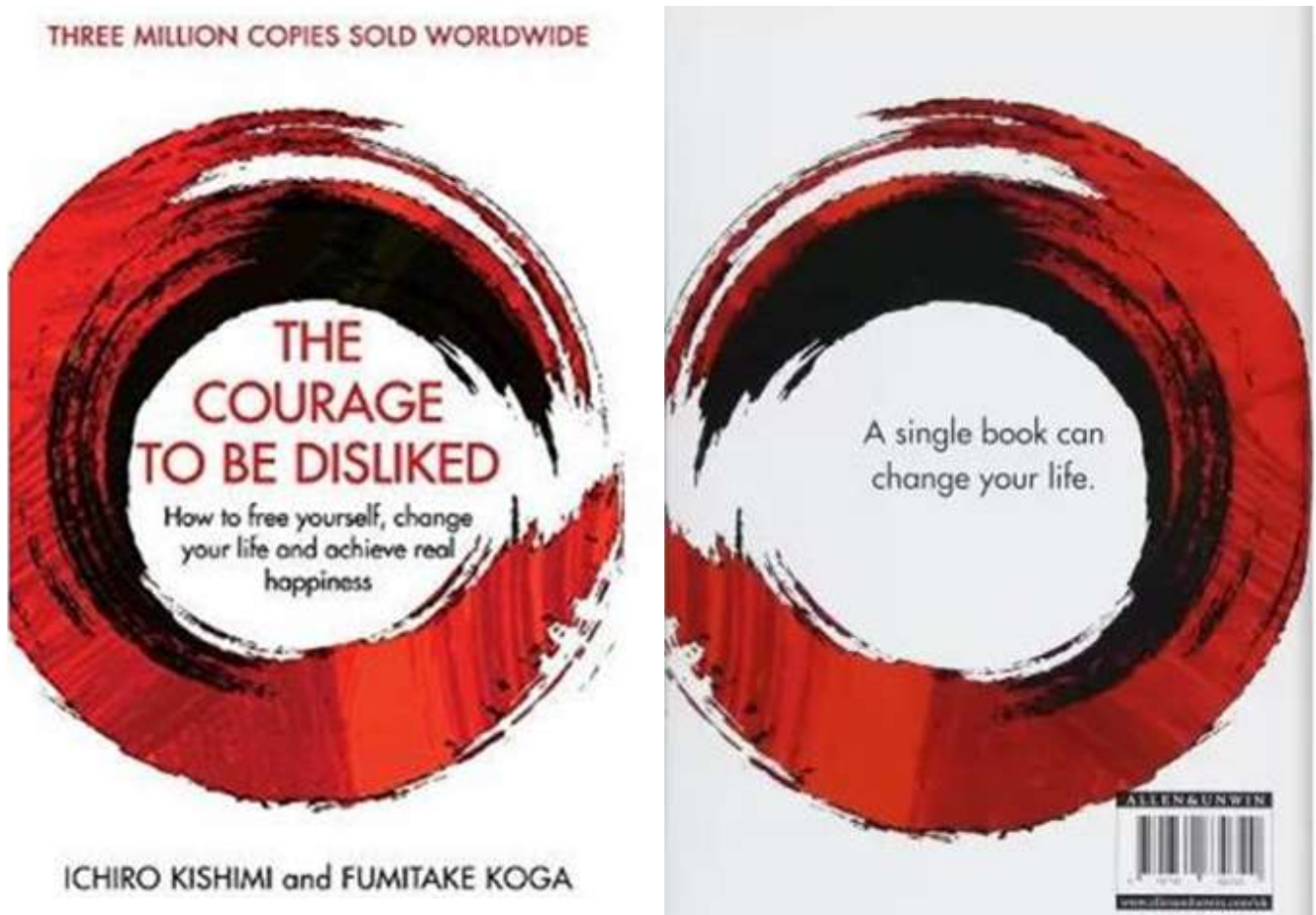
Fumitake Koga is an award-winning professional writer and author. He has released numerous bestselling works of business-related and general nonfiction. He encountered Adlerian psychology in his late twenties and was deeply affected by its conventional wisdom-defying ideas. Thereafter, Koga made numerous visits to Ichiro Kishimi in Kyoto, gleaned from him the essence of Adlerian psychology, and took down the notes for the classical "dialogue format" method of Greek philosophy that is used in this book.



INTRODUCTION

It is a thought-provoking book that will challenge your thought process and belief system. It is totally different from other books in the self-help genre. It has answers to all the questions of life about work, relationships, love, family, happiness, community, etc., about almost everything. As it is written on the back cover of the book that a book can change your life, it surely has changed mine. The perspective from which to look at everything has changed. The book's writing is very captivating. Even a person who barely reads a book will find it engaging. The complete book is a conversation between a young man and a wise person known as a philosopher. I could relate so much to the young man and his questions.

The book follows Alfred Adler's psychology. According to Adlerian psychology, there are many concepts introduced in the book, like people are not controlled by the past, Separation Of Tasks, Life -Lies, Pursuit of Superiority, A feeling of community, Don't rebuke or praise and the most important aspect, the courage to be disliked.



Initially, I did not agree with the concepts introduced in the book. Almost everything written in the group is totally opposite to what we have learned so far in psychology. For example, if I get angry suddenly, I believe there must be something that triggered me to get angry. But according to Alderian's psychology, we get angry because we want to get angry, not because the anger is triggered by something or someone. This concept is totally different from any other book where it is said that you are who you are because of your past. But here, it is said that your past doesn't matter.

The dialogue format of the book makes all the complex psychological concepts easily understandable and relatable. However, one may need to revisit certain passages or concepts to fully grasp their meaning and integrate them into one's life.

The book is fast-paced, and you would be curious to read more and more, but the concepts introduced are so overwhelming that it takes time to understand them. The questions asked by the young person are the questions that generally arise in our minds. So at times, you feel you are asking the question through the young man.

This book will certainly change your way of thinking. But at the same time, everyone may not resonate with this book and with the dialogues. It is a philosophical and psychological book, but with a different psychology than that of renowned psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. One needs to first unlearn a few things to learn and understand things about Alderian psychology.

In conclusion,

“The courage to be disliked” is a must read for everyone. It is a realisation, a culmination of truths and of human psychology. The book will change your way of thinking in profoundly liberating manner. Do you have “The courage to be disliked” if not then you need to read the book if yes then you need to read the book to develop the “Courage to be Happy”

And it is not only about reading the book but what use one makes of reading the book. As to quote Adler “The important thing is not what you are born with , but what use one makes of that equipment”

Rating: 5/5

THE COURAGE TO BE DISLIKED



The Japanese phenomenon that
shows you how to change your life
and achieve real happiness



Maj Sheetal Deshmukh Retd was Commissioned from OTA Chennai in Mar 2003, she retired from Indian Army in 2010 with 7 years of service in Corps of Engrs. Presently, she is working as Assistant Manager (Administration) in a Research Institute at Pune. She is passionate about holistic health and reading books. Readers can share their feedback of book review at majorsheetal@gmail.com

Please provide your invaluable opinion/feedback on this Review, by clicking/tapping [HERE](#) - Editor



Every 90 seconds across the world, a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth.

Navika Sagar Parikrama

Women Empowerment and Make In India

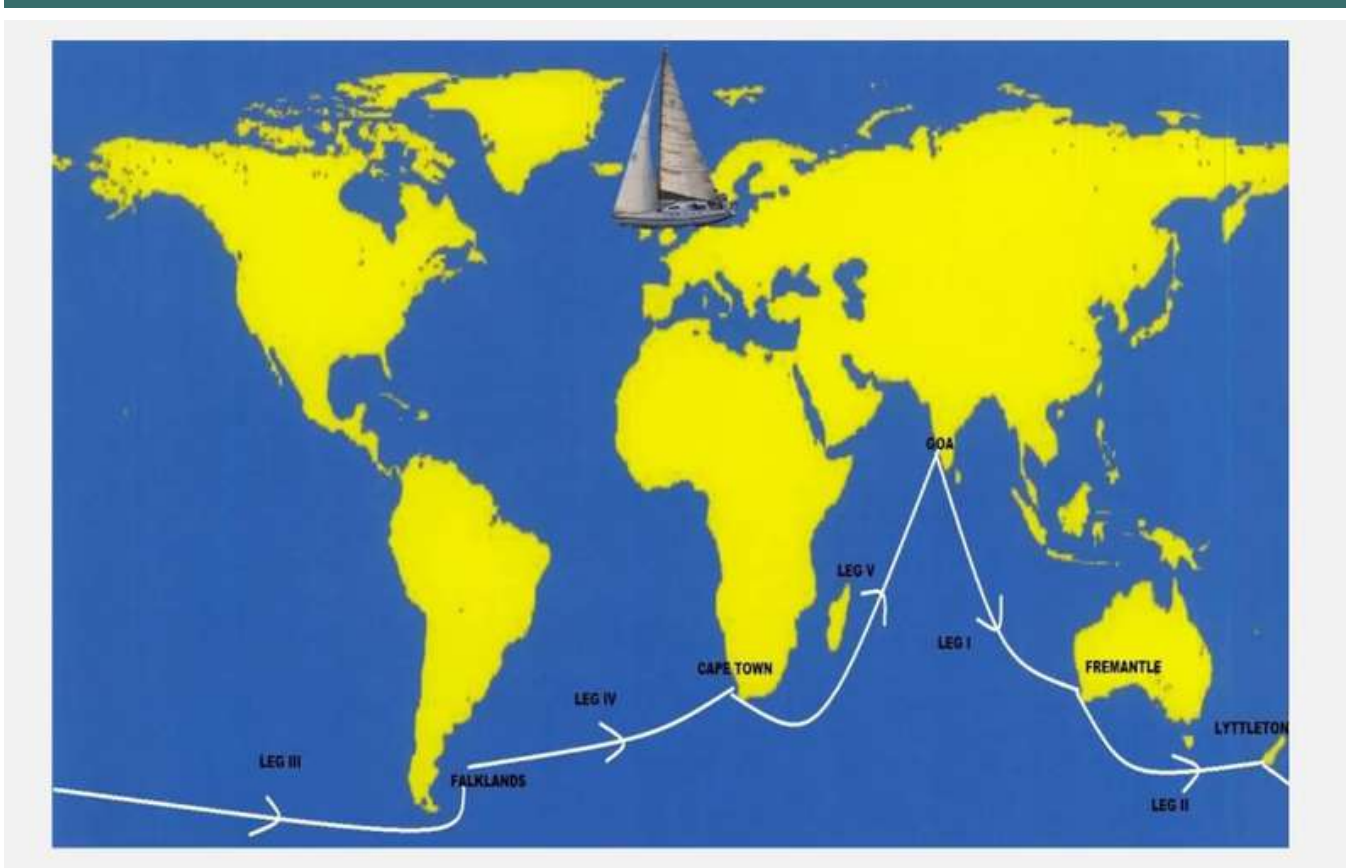
Navika Sagar Parikrama was a circumnavigation of the globe by female officers of the Indian Navy. The six-member all-woman team circumnavigated and managed the whole operation in their first-ever global journey on INSV Tarini. The voyage lasted 254 days, crossing the equator twice and passing through three oceans. The boat returned to INS Mandovi in Goa after travelling 21,600 nautical miles (40,000 km; 24,900 mi).

The significance of the Navika Sagar Parikrama voyage is in consonance with National policy on women's empowerment to attain their full potential, showcase India's Nari Shakti on a world platform, and help revolutionise attitudes and mindsets towards women by raising the visibility of their participation in challenging environments. The voyage also aims to showcase the Make in India initiative of the government by sailing on board an Indian-built INSV Tarini.



The crew was selected in 2014 from 40 applicants out of 500 women naval officers in service. Chosen from different cadres in service, The crew was comprised of:

- Lt Cdr Vartika Joshi, (skipper), from Uttarakhand
- Lt Cdr Pratibha Jamwal, from Himachal Pradesh
- Lt Cdr Aishwarya Boddapati, from Telangana
- Lt Cdr P Swathi, from Andhra Pradesh
- Lt Shourgrakpam Vijaya Devi, from Manipur
- Lt Payal Gupta, from Uttarakhand



After 3 years of rigorous training, the team 'Tarini' set sail, and the voyage was flagged off by Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on 10th September 2017 from Goa. The voyage covered five legs, with stops at four ports, namely Fremantle (Australia), Lyttleton (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Falklands), and Cape Town (South Africa), and an emergency stop-over at Mauritius. The team returned on 21st May 2018 to Goa after 254 days. The distance covered was more than 21,600 miles. Crossed three Great Capes: Cape Leeuwen, Cape Horn, and the Cape of Good Hope.

The six members were conferred with the Nau Sena Medal for completing the arduous journey in the list of gallantry award winners announced on 14th August 2018. The team was also awarded the "Nari Shakti Puraskar" for outstanding contribution towards women's empowerment by the President of India.



The time was the early 15th century, and the place was France. Caught in the seemingly endless French and English skirmishes over territory and succession to the French crown, Joan (a farm girl) felt compelled to act. Relying upon her faith in God and the guidance of long-dead saints, she took her courage in hand and led French troops in many battles, notably to victory in Orléans. After her capture, she was tried for heresy and burned at the stake.

Numero Uno of WSES-01

Capt Anjana Bhadauria

MEET CAPT ANJANA BHADAURIA WHO WAS COMMISSIONED AS PART OF THE WSES-01 ON 6TH MAR 1993. SHE WAS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 1ST GOLD MEDAL, THUS EARNING HER SERVICE PERSONAL NO. AS WS00001.



IQ: You were part of the Pioneers so to speak ie the first batch of women officers in the Indian Army. Add to that you are WS-0001 virtually the numero uno, truly historic. Describe your feelings and emotions as you look back. Did you really realize the import of your achievement then?

Anjana: It was truly a moment of immense pride to be a part of the first batch of women officers. The competition was fierce, with a staggering 25,000 applicants vying for the opportunity. Out of those, only 250 were shortlisted, and I felt incredibly fortunate to be among the final 25 who were selected for the inaugural batch.

To be honest, I never set out with the specific goal of winning the Gold medal. My focus was on giving my best in every aspect, whether it was excelling in academics, pushing myself physically, or mastering weapon training. So, when I learned that I was going to receive the Gold medal, I was overwhelmed with joy. It was more than just receiving the medal; it was about being part of history, with the honour of having my personal number designated as 00001.

At that moment, the magnitude of my achievement truly sank in. Against the wishes of my elder brother and relatives, I pursued my dream of joining the Army. After my father's sudden passing in 1990, the responsibility fell on my brother, who had just started working after completing his Engineering degree. He was hesitant to send me to Chennai for training, and our relatives wanted us to relocate to our native place. However, my determination to join the Army never wavered, and with the support of my mother, my brother finally agreed to let me pursue my dreams at OTA Chennai.

I later learned that my decision faced resentment from some relatives, and my mother had to endure criticism for sending me to such a place. However, everything changed when I won the Gold medal, and my achievement made headlines. Suddenly, those very same relatives who were once skeptical became proud and acknowledged my success.

It was indeed a challenging journey, but I am grateful for the unwavering support of my mother and the opportunity to prove myself. Joining the Army was my calling, and I couldn't be prouder of where it has taken me.

IQ: Would you say that joining the Army was a life changing experience? What exactly changed from what you were when you joined as cadet and the day you passed out of the OTA?

Anjana: Indeed, the experience of becoming a commissioned officer at the academy was truly life-changing for me. Mentally prepared for the tough and rigorous training that lay ahead, I emerged from the academy as a completely transformed individual, ready to take on the challenges of my new role.

In the past, I had never been an early riser. Throughout my school days, I would stay up late at night to complete my syllabus before exams, and studying in the morning was never my forte. However, this became a significant obstacle during my time at the academy. Every morning, I would motivate myself with a resolute "Yes, I can do it," and that mindset carried me through the rest of the day. Remarkably, this habit of rising early stuck with me even after my training, and to this day, I continue to start my mornings with the same dedication.

The training instilled in me the values of discipline, punctuality, and effective time management. I realised the importance of remaining physically active, and since leaving the Army, I have rarely missed my evening walks. My daily routine now starts at 5 a.m., where I engage in yoga, strength training, and pranayams, which keep me energised for the entire day. This newfound dedication to a healthy lifestyle is something I wholeheartedly attribute to the lessons learned during my time at the academy.

Moreover, the training also shaped my sense of punctuality. I am never late for any occasion or function; in fact, I make a point to arrive at least five minutes ahead of schedule, not out of obligation but out of a genuine desire to be prompt and respectful of others' time. This sense of punctuality has become an integral part of who I am, and I owe it all to the comprehensive training we received during those six months at OTA.

In conclusion, the journey to becoming a commissioned officer was transformative in more ways than one. It not only equipped me with the necessary skills and knowledge for my career but also cultivated essential qualities like discipline, punctuality, and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle. I will forever be grateful to the academy for shaping me into the person I am today.

The Army training not only instilled discipline and punctuality but also taught me invaluable lessons in stress management. As a commissioned officer, I learned that maintaining a high level of discipline was not just about adhering to rules and regulations; it was about having the self-control to stay focused and composed even in the most challenging situations.

In the Army, stress is an inevitable part of the job, especially during critical missions and operations. However, the training I received equipped me with effective stress management techniques that I still rely on today. I learned the importance of staying calm under pressure, making rational decisions, and keeping a clear mind amidst chaos. This ability to manage stress not only helped me perform better in my duties but also translated into my civilian life, enabling me to face personal challenges with a composed and resilient attitude.



IQ: Tell us more about your military career? What were the challenges you faced, how you overcame them? Any abiding memories?

Anjana: Being part of the first batch of Women officers brought numerous challenges both at the academy and during our postings. Our instructors were unsure how to handle us, and some of us would cry when scolded, leading to a more lenient approach from the instructors. We often received moral lectures, with some suggesting that anyone who couldn't handle the pressure should leave. In the beginning, our experience was tough, and we questioned whether we had made the right decision to join the training. Being the first batch, the physical fitness standards were ambiguous, but they were eventually tailored to our capabilities. Additionally, the requirement to tie long hair in a specific manner consumed valuable time, prompting many female trainees to cut their hair short.

The confusion about our status added to the challenges. I recall an incident here: we began training while another batch, SS55, had already been training for three months. Our status wasn't entirely clear, but it was later resolved that we were parallel to SS55. However, another dilemma arose when SS56 joined three months into our training, and they were considered junior to SS55. They displayed a lack of respect for us, which was disheartening. As an appointment, I decided to address the issue during a screening of an English movie. I confronted SS56, asking them to treat us with respect. This led to a complaint against me, and I was called before the Academy adjutant, potentially risking my appointment. Nevertheless, I stood my ground, explaining the situation, and the status of our batch was made clear to everyone.

Even after getting commissioned, it took time for the troops to accept women officers and take orders from us. When I was posted in Kolkata, some jawans were taken aback to see a female officer in uniform and failed to salute as they were unaware of female officers' presence in the Army. It took proving ourselves in various tests and exercises to earn respect from our subordinates.

Being the first female officers, we were closely observed, and any small mistake could negatively impact the perception of all women officers. This led to some unease among the wives of male officers, who felt slightly insecure with the presence of women officers around them.

Despite these challenges, we persevered, proving our capabilities and dedication to our roles as women officers in the defence forces. Subsequent batches didn't face the same level of skepticism as the troops became more accustomed to the idea of women officers serving alongside their male counterparts.

IQ: We would like to know about your family ? Tell us about the children as well?

Anjana: I come from a humble background, and my grandfather lived in a village in Mainpuri. Despite the challenging circumstances, he strongly believed in the power of education and ensured that all his children received a proper education. As a result, all my paternal aunts and uncles pursued higher studies, and my father, after completing his M.Sc., worked as a teacher before joining the Air Force in the Education Field. My father's

stories of the hardships that he and his siblings faced while pursuing education always inspired me. These narratives ignited a desire within me to strive for something unique and different from the norm. Following in the footsteps of my family, I pursued my M.Sc. in microbiology, which was a prerequisite for commissioning as a food scientist in the ASC, leading me to join the Army.

My sister, too, achieved a postgraduate degree and is now a lecturer, while both my brothers are Engineers from esteemed institutes. My husband, Col Rajesh Parmar, is also an Army Officer in the ASC. He has an impressive background, is an alumnus of NDA and RIMC, and is currently on the first leg of re-employment.

Together, we have been blessed with two children. Our daughter, Nikita Parmar, completed her MBA from NMIMS and is currently working at Wipro, based in Bangalore. Our son, Aditya Parmar, is employed with Deloitte and resides in Hyderabad.

The pursuit of education and the spirit of determination run deeply in our family, and we are proud to carry on this legacy while serving our country in the Indian Army.



IQ: You had a brilliant career in the Indian Army for 10 years and then you decided not pick up a job and became a home maker. It sounds a bit surprising. Tell us about this decision?

Anjana: I served in the Army for a period of 10 years and was released in June 2003. Rather than choosing to become a housewife, I decided to take a 4-year break to focus on raising my children. During this time, my daughter was 5 years old, and my son was 1 year old. Thereafter, in 2007, I pursued a course in "Business Management" from IIM Indore.

On completion, I joined a manufacturing firm called Abhishek Industry as Manager HR in Barnala, with their head office in Ludhiana. My belief in maintaining a work-life balance led me to make career choices that allowed me to be close to my children. Consequently, I didn't stick to a single field but rather explored various job opportunities.

I worked for a construction firm named MJ Infrastructure as Manager HR, and I was later promoted to the position of COO of the company in Bangalore. When my husband got posted to tier 2 stations, I took up teaching on an ad hoc basis, offering science and math classes in Army schools and some private schools, such as Christ Church Jabalpur and Mayo School Ajmer. I have had the opportunity to conduct spoken English classes and soft skill training for college students and working professionals at Speak Easy Institute in Koramangala, Bangalore. Apart from this, I have also been associated with AWWA (Army Wives Welfare Association) activities, where I conduct spoken English classes for JCOs and ORs wives. Additionally, I have taken batches for the children of Army personnel studying in different grades at various places. My passion for teaching grew, and during the COVID pandemic, I became a freelance trainer, providing online coaching services. I have continued in this role ever since.

Overall, my journey after leaving the Army has been diverse and fulfilling, with a focus on balancing my professional endeavours with family responsibilities and a passion for teaching and training.

IQ: What are your future plans? We are sure you are not done as yet?

Anjana: I am currently a freelance trainer, engaging in both online and offline classes. However, I have bigger aspirations that drive me forward. One of my dreams is to write a book on personal development or

motivational topics. Through my diverse experiences, I hope to inspire and guide others on their journey of self-improvement, unlocking their potential, and achieving personal growth.

Additionally, I am eager to get associated with an NGO where I can offer my services to those in need, contributing to the betterment of society. This desire to give back and make a positive impact has always been a driving force in my life. Another area that I am passionate about is emotional and mental well-being. I believe that emotional and mental health are essential aspects of overall well-being. Hence, I intend to impart talks and workshops on emotional well-being, providing insights and strategies to navigate life's challenges and emotions. Empowering individuals with the tools to enhance their emotional resilience and find balance in their personal and professional lives is a meaningful goal I strive to achieve.

I continue to strive to explore various fields that I haven't yet ventured into. As I continue to explore various fields and opportunities, I remain committed to my personal growth journey, which includes pursuing spiritual learning, physical fitness, and mental well-being.

Each day presents new opportunities for learning and evolving, and I am excited to embark on these journeys, making a positive difference in both my life and the lives of others. The desire to empower and uplift others is the driving force behind my passion for training, writing, and engaging in activities that contribute to the betterment of individuals and society as a whole.

IQ: What advice would you like to give to young girls aspiring for a military career today?

Anjana: To all the young girls aspiring for a military career today, I would like to share my journey and offer some advice. Firstly, I encourage and invite those who are genuinely passionate about joining the defence forces. It is your dedication and love for the triservices that will fuel your drive and commitment in the long run.

I am pleased to witness the doors opening for girls at prestigious institutions like RIMC and NDA, where the lady cadets are excelling remarkably.

Many Sainik Schools also have proposals to admit girls, marking a positive shift towards inclusivity in the military.

As someone who has experienced the pride and fulfilment of serving in the Army, I can confidently say that this is one of the finest professions you can choose. It offers respect, a good salary, and a host of perks, along with the assurance of a secure life. There is no better way to serve your nation than through the defence forces.

For all the aspiring young girls, I urge you to stay committed to your dreams, work hard, and embrace the challenges that come your way. Your passion and dedication will be the driving forces in your journey towards a successful military career. Embrace opportunities for growth, seek guidance from experienced mentors, and remember that serving your country is a privilege and an honour. Together, we can look forward to a future where girls are not only present but excel even in fighting. The defence forces await those who are ready to embrace this noble calling with passion and determination.



From a Logistics Officer to a Top Head Hunter

Lt Nishu Miglani

MEET LT NISHU MIGLANI WHO WAS COMMISSIONED AS A LOGISTICS OFFICER ON 13 JULY 1992. CURRENTLY SHE IS THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SEARCH QUEST CONSULTANTS PRIVATE LIMITED BASED AT MUMBAI.



IQ: You were part of the Pioneers so to speak i.e. the first batch of women officers in the IN. Describe your feelings and emotions as you look back on the day you got commissioned. Did you really realize the import of your achievement then? How does it feel now?

Nishu: Joining forces, and that too in the Indian Navy, was not only my passion but a dream come true for me then. On 13th July 2023, when I looked back on my commissioning day (13th July 1992) in the Indian Navy, I felt overwhelmed with a strong sense of pride, fulfilment, and gratitude. Each day I spent in the Indian Navy, they always pushed me to overachieve the tasks assigned and to face any difficult situation with ease. The milestones achieved during my tenure, be it being the Best Cadet in my batch at the Naval Academy, be it the modernization of the cadet's mess in INS Sivaji Lonavala, be it being the first woman Staff Officer at INS Sivaji Lonavala, be it ISO 9002 implementation at INS Sivaji Lonavala with the help of seniors and team, be it part of the pilot team for Nau Sena Bhavan

planning at NHQ Delhi, overseeing Civil Projects in Delhi, Dehradun, and Western Naval Command with the collaboration of MES, managing inventory planning for 40 ships in Western Naval Command, and being part of multiple high-profile technical projects at all times seems like a blessing that a logistics officer like me could get purely based upon merit and competencies. Had I been given the opportunity to get a permanent commission, I would not have left the Navy.

Now, after spending 24 years in the civil world since I retired (in 1999), I still feel nostalgic and feel more confident each day to discharge my duties with the same passion, vigour, and mental toughness by servicing customers with the best solutions. All thanks to training by the Navy, standing tall in civil life was a cake walk since discipline and task orientation are key to differentiate forces and civil life, and having served for 7 years, these two attributes are now part of my DNA and allow me to think beyond the call of duty and to fulfil my dreams.



**Best Sub Lieutenant award amongst First Batch of Lady Officers in
Logistics Cadre at INS Hamla**

IQ: Would you say that joining the IN was a life changing experience? What exactly changed from what you were when you joined as cadet and the day you passed out of the IN Academy?

Nishu: Yes, joining the Indian Navy was a life-changing experience for me since, coming from a small town background, I was like a clay to whom the Navy gave the finishing touch, and the below qualities changed my life forever.

When I joined, I was highly ambitious and used to think more from the heart, and my decisions were mostly emotion-based. But when I passed out, I could see a lot of radical and practical thinking, which I imbibed while serving in the Navy for 7 years and which helped me become a well-rounded professional.

During my initial training days, I had thought, "What if I am not able to live up to expectations of the Navy in a few complex tasks assigned to me for the first time?" But robust training and my experience in different establishments during different duties exposed me so much that I became fearless that I could treat success and failure as two sides of a coin and kept giving my best to achieve desired results rather than worrying about failing. When I passed out, I could feel that there is nothing that one cannot achieve since the word "IMPOSSIBLE" also says I AM POSSIBLE.

I was a qualified civil engineer with a master's degree, so I was not sure if in the logistics cadre I would get challenging assignments to satisfy my professional urge since I wanted to give my best and serve the nation during my short service stint to the best of my abilities by making a difference each day. But to my surprise, the Indian Navy went out of their way to accommodate my skills, and I was given duties that not only utilised my capabilities but also helped me to go beyond the call of duty to overachieve milestones that became impressionable for the next batches to follow.

The power of the uniform Navy taught me, and since the day I passed out till date, I feel that if there is a war in the future, I will be the first to nominate myself to serve the nation again. The clarity and purity of thought process post-wearing a uniform are things I feel each person has to experience in their life. This is the impact of the Navy on me.



INS Shivaji Cadet Mess : Was awarded as **Best Mess** by COL Vice Admiral Purohit for Automation done by Lieutenant Miglani

IQ: Tell us more about your naval career? What were the challenges you faced, how you overcame them? Any abiding memories?

Nishu: Naval career was full of memorable challenges: Being in the first batch, ships were not ready to accommodate overnight stays, so we were just confined to base postings only. Policies and guidelines for women from a uniform perspective were also more focused on keeping diversity and gender in mind than treating us as Equals. Wearing a skirt during daytime training in the academy and a saree during dinner time was not at all easy to cope with the physical punishments with the rifle and running with drill boots and the Patti parade we had to go through. The mindset of sailors and DSC Jawans and civilian staff was still to change, so there was a huge acceptance issue by them to accept us as their bosses.

The mind set of cadets in Training and later on male colleagues was still at the question mark stage to see how we performed as lady officers and whether we would be able to compete at par. I always felt that once one wears a uniform, if there is focus and passion to deliver and serve the nation, all hurdles and obstacles become secondary. So at my level, I always kept myself level-headed and focused on tasks assigned rather than getting distracted. I treated my fellow cadets, male officers, my staff,

sailors, DSC jawans, and civilians report to me with the same dignity and pride as I would want myself to be treated by them. Suddenly I could see a paradigm shift where rather than getting discriminated against, equality and acceptance started coming from the heart with an open mind, and I enjoyed my 7-year stint with ease by keeping my chin high. On the other hand, in order to bring about changes in uniform, our batch had put forward a logical request, and we could wear trousers in place of Skirts and sarees. During our training times, I also worked hard and never asked for any excuses, be it climbing rope, running cross country, going on treks, or taking on challenges upfront.

Two memories that still bring a smile to my face are:

- When first time as Staff officer I was inspecting Parade sailor promptly shouted "staff apke nirikshan ke liye tyar ha shriman, one officer in lighter way prompted she is Lady Officer so sailor immediately said" Parade apke nirikshan ke liye tyar ha shrimati".
- Once, when I went to take a round of base as an OOD (officer of duty), DSC jawans loudly used to say JAI HIND (Madam Sir).

I was mostly called "SHE MAN or "Phoolan Devi" during my naval stint



Accompanied Indian Hockey Team to President House and organized 8th Indira Gandhi Gold Cup Hockey tournament under leadership of DCNS Vice Admiral Tondon

There are many beautiful memories that are associated with the Indian Navy, but I am glad that by bringing in the first batch, we could lay a greener pasture for the next batches, where permanent commission is granted and women are allowed on ships and for combat duties. I'm glad that as the pioneer batch, our visions and dreams for the future of women in the military have come true.

IQ: We would like to know about your family.

Nishu: I am single and happy to the core that, due to this decision, I could pay undivided attention to my Naval career and now am leading a complete life in the civil world by doing different tasks daily with time in hand. I have a beautiful and motivating family comprising of my mother, two brothers, and one sister (all are professionally qualified and doing exceptionally well in their field).

IQ: You had a wonderful career in the Indian Navy for 7 years, and then you decided to pursue a career in the corporate world. Tell us how you prepared for your second career.

Nishu: I wish I had an option to get a permanent commission, but when, towards the end of 1998, I was told that the Navy can only extend my commission for another 7 years and not beyond, I made up my mind to take the plunge into civil life so that I am able to establish myself with an open mind and with ease.

My second career journey planning started in January 1999 since my release date was 12th July 1999, so I kept six months in hand to get myself a suitable job in the corporate world. I never wanted to get labelled under admin/security officer's jobs, which typically are offered to Non-technical branches of the armed forces, so I made a list of streams where I felt my capabilities were best suited, and I chose consulting, marketing, and planning areas.

I prepared 400 copies of my resume for the 3 categories of jobs I wanted to apply for, took leave for 15 days, and met almost 200 people, including 50 HR heads and 30 recruitment firms' consultants. My main aim was to meet as many people as possible to get an idea of what would be the best fit job and organisation for my kind of profile and to plan my long-term career. During those days, mobile was not there, and emails were not common media, so I ensured that by collecting information from the TATA

yellow pages directory of company addresses, I made a personal visit to present my capabilities. In May 1999, I received three offers: one from a consulting firm, one from a marketing company, and one from a company offering a planning job. I chose a consulting job with ABC Consultants (the top recruitment firm then) since I was offered the lead position to set up their infrastructure sector from scratch and do recruitment for all the big construction companies like HCC, Hiranandani, Raheja, Oberoi, Kalpataru, etc. I started my second inning immediately after my release from the Navy without taking any break.

So planning, clarity of thought, and a focused approach, which were attributes given by the Navy, helped me plan my second inning smoothly.

IQ: What made you an entrepreneur? What is the mindset shift that an entrepreneur has to make from an employee mindset? Was that easy?

Nishu: After serving in the Navy and working in the corporate world for 8 years, I always felt the urge that I could do more and make a difference in society. That was possible only if I had my own setup. So I took a big leap in my career by saying goodbye to corporate life and starting my own company on 1st Feb, 2008 by the name "**Search Quest Consultants Private Limited**". It was a big risk and the most difficult time of my career since the BFSI market due to the Lehman Brothers Bank closeout was at an absolute low and my company's major clients were Investment banks and KPO captives only. But there is a saying that "nothing succeeds like success," so with the blessings of my seniors

from previous organisation, my esteemed clients, and my team, which stood by me in all the toughest patches, we could make the company profitable in the first year of operation itself. To date, we are running the organisation as a self-funded organisation with no investors and zero debts, loans, or liabilities. But it was not all an easy task, since to become an entrepreneur from an employee requires a complete shift in mindset.



When one is an employee, there is a fixed income coming every month, and if one is performing well, job security is granted. But as an entrepreneur, when one is one's own boss every day and every minute, there is a challenge to de-risk the organisation through cash flow management, profitability management, business development, paying salaries to employees on time, key employee retention, and ensuring customer satisfaction through flawless delivery and then collections on time.

Being an entrepreneur, one has to have risk-taking ability since, in the current situation, when the market is so volatile and the competition is so tough, "Survival of the fittest is the only attitude that can sail.

Overall, for me, since it was a well-thought-out decision to take the plunge to be an entrepreneur, the Navy training is, of course, helping me to stay afloat on a daily basis in spite of inevitable challenges.



IQ: Now that you have been in the recruitment industry for long, let me pick on your experience. Where do you think most veterans go wrong in their corporate careers? What are the aspects that they must work to improve?

Nishu: I strongly feel that people underestimate themselves and get satisfied with routine jobs like admin, security, planning, etc. when the whole world is open in front of them with opportunities that are infinite. Most do not go out due to fear of failure or meet people to showcase their potential. Here are a few tips for Veterans to improve to get a good job in the corporate world:

Each Veteran must plan well in advance prior to leaving the forces and must be aware of their capabilities, which are most suited to the civil world. Veterans have to take risks and should be ready to accept challenging jobs even at medium perks and salaries in the beginning, and they should prove themselves to gain a higher position in the shortest possible time.

Veterans must prepare their resumes with a lot of clarity so that they get maximum interviews. Veterans must apply to as many organisations and jobs on their own by writing to the CEO rather than being dependent on placement cells or agencies.

IQ: What are your future plans?

Nishu: At present, Search Quest Consultants is operating at the domestic level, so my future plan is to take the company to the global level and work towards making the company the "Most Preferred Employer "in the industry.

In parallel, I want to give back to society, for which I have set up the Nishu Miglani Charitable Trust, which is focused on the education of needy children. I want to take this trust to the national level by creating a platform for bright, needy children to become self-reliant.

Coaching and teaching are my passions, so I am working on a framework that will help in coaching and motivating people across levels for career orientation, goal setting and achievement, how one can lead a fulfilled life, etc. I love travelling, so I will continue my travel passion by visiting different places in India and outside India. Fitness and cooking are my

hobbies, so I will continue to focus on my fitness routine via gym, Zumba, Pilates, yoga, and running marathons. For cooking, I will start the cooking channel on YouTube to share my experience on various recipes, and eventually I may set up a take-away food chain or small café.

IQ: What advice would you like to give to young girls aspiring for a military career today?

Nishu: The Indian armed forces symbolise the ideals of service, patriotism, and the composite culture of the country. A career in the defence forces promises one of the most respected and prestigious positions in the country. Youngsters who aspire to choose a career of excitement, adventure, and challenges can find no better place than defence to meet all their professional expectations.

My advice to young girls would be:

- Plan well for the stream (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard) that you wish to join and start preparing on a daily basis by becoming disciplined, taking training for physical fitness, and reading about criteria and guidelines on the portal www.india.gov.in.
- Develop soft skills like clear communication and a task-oriented approach. Multitasking and mental resilience are essential.
- Pay full attention to personality traits in terms of Posture, Body language, and etiquette.
- Develop a good IQ by reading and developing razor-sharp memory skills.
- Develop a fearless and go-getter attitude.



From an Air Force Officer to a Clinical Psychologist

Sqn Ldr Meena Arora

MEET SQN LDR MEENA ARORA WHO WAS COMMISSIONED ON 18 DEC 2004. CURRENTLY SHE IS IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FIELD HEALING MINDS AND SOULS AS A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND LIFE COACH WITH A VIEW TO UNLOCKING THEIR TRUE POTENTIAL.



IQ: It must have been a memorable and a historic occasion when you got commissioned. Describe your feelings and emotions as you look back. Did you really realize the import of your achievement then?

Meena: My early experiences in Meerut, when I attended the school in the cantonment region, served as my inspiration to seek a career in the armed services. The sight of army convoys and vehicles moving, troops marching in unison, and the distinguished presence of decorated commanders in their Gypsies fascinated me from a very young age. These interactions left a strong impact on me and made me appreciate defence officials' exceptional personalities. Obviously, they became my role models, and I wanted to be just like them.



My cadet days! Some of the most memorable days of my life

My parents raised me at par with my two brothers. They stood by my side against the society and never imposed women stereotyped images on me. So, I wanted to live up to their expectations and keep their honour high. I thus searched for an employment that required not just a handsome salary but also respect and dignity. I was quite excited and intrigued by the idea of travelling and going on long journeys, working with fighter aircrafts, and handling a diverse variety of tasks. Moreover, seeing the extraordinary accomplishments of female officers boosted my confidence in my ability to succeed as a woman in the military.

Yes, the day of commissioning was a culmination of a long cherished childhood dream. I really felt on top of the world that day!

IQ: Would you say that joining the IAF was a life altering experience? What were the hesitations in your mind or any societal blocks that you faced?

Meena: Prior to joining the Academy, I had several hesitations in my mind, but eventually things worked out for the best. Although my parents desired for me to choose my own career path and become self-dependent, opting for the defence forces was a new concept within our family. There were no relatives or friends who had pursued a career in the military. Our

extended family typically favoured professions such as doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, teachers, professors, or the idea of moving to developed countries.

My parents faced criticism from our relatives for allowing their daughter to join a service that they wouldn't even consider for their sons. Consequently, I kept my decision hidden from my parents until I received the final call letter. I knew that if they were aware, they wouldn't even allow me to appear for the entrance exams. In Indian society, women face numerous restrictions, needing the presence of male family members when traveling, particularly outside their hometown. Additionally, turning 23 brought pressure to get married at the earliest. The burden of these restrictions made it challenging for me to make decisions independently.

Therefore, receiving the final call letter felt like an escape from the familial and social shackles. Joining the esteemed Indian Air Force provided me with a tremendous sense of freedom, acknowledging me to live life on my own terms and conditions. I did have to face many ups and downs and inevitable challenges in my life, but despite all that, I can proudly say that I have lived a life according to my own choices and have always made my parents proud.



Such pics – still give me goosebumps

IQ: Tell us more about your military career? What were the challenges you faced, how you overcame them? Any abiding memories you wish to share?

Meena: In the hindsight, I can confidently say that my military career has been an unparalleled journey, providing me with extensive exposure and invaluable learnings. From the very beginning, during the training period, I discovered strengths and capabilities I never knew I possessed. The rigorous physical fitness regime pushed me beyond my limits, unveiling my untapped potential. Additionally, the academic training encompassed a wide range of subjects, including law, administration, war studies, and my core job responsibilities, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted aspects of military life.

Psychologically, my identity as a soldier was deeply ingrained, and the sight of our tricolored flag never failed to evoke overwhelming emotions of pride and patriotism. Through various postings and temporary duties, I had the privilege of visiting remote areas within our Indian territory that would have otherwise been inaccessible to me and unknown to the general population. The dynamic and sensitive nature of my work profile was a constant reminder of the gravity of my decisions, as they could potentially impact lives, even in times of war.

This realisation and profound insight infused in me an enormous sense of responsibility, deep pride, and elevated self-esteem. There was a time, when I got an opportunity to lead and motivate a team of over 300 individuals. As I navigated the challenges of leadership, I gained invaluable practical knowledge, experience and understanding of human psychology. This newfound wisdom eventually paved the way towards my present-day full-time profession as a psychologist and life coach.

Beyond the professional growth, I also cherished the camaraderie and bonds formed with my colleagues. We shared memorable moments, explored new places, and truly grasped the value of teamwork. Coming from diverse backgrounds, religions, and regions, we lived and worked harmoniously in an environment that celebrated diversity.

The gravity and value of life and relationships became deeply ingrained in me, particularly when I witnessed the sacrifice of my own coursemates who became martyrs in the service of our nation. This realization fostered

an even stronger sense of belonging within the defence organization. Wherever and whenever I travelled, there was always a place to call home, food to share, and friends and fellow unit members eagerly awaiting my arrival.

In retrospect, my Air Force career has been a transformative and profoundly enriching chapter of my life. It provided me with unparalleled exposure, opportunities for personal growth, and an unwavering sense of purpose and belonging.

IQ: What were the proudest moments of your IAF career or something that pride of uniform post your release from service?

Meena: Every moment in my military career was filled with pride and honour. From the initial selection process to being commissioned and donning the prestigious Blue Air Force uniform, each step brought a sense of accomplishment. I cannot relate service specific incidents and achievements, but the nature of my job, serving the nation directly or and indirectly, has always heightened the feeling of pride and purpose.

Being a soldier is a lifelong commitment, and even today, I continue to witness the trust and respect in the eyes of my family and non-military acquaintances. This ongoing recognition fills me with immense pride. However, there is one particular incident that stands out as a source of great pride for me. During a casual conversation, a colleague's 7-year-old daughter expressed her aspiration to become an independent and responsible officer like "Meena Aunty." Knowing that I had become a role model and inspired and influenced a young mind to dream big and pursue a similar path was truly humbling and reaffirmed the significance of my service.

Another moment that I hold dear to my heart occurred after completing my short service commission. On Republic Day, I was invited by my college in Meerut to hoist our National Flag, oversee and supervise the NCC parade, and deliver a motivational speech. The parade was attended by students, teachers, and representatives from two colleges. My mother, who was the guest of honour alongside me, shared that she was overwhelmed with pride and nearly brought to tears witnessing her daughter command such respect and honour on such a significant day.

These proud and humbling instances, among many others, have enhanced my confidence and left an indelible mark on my personality. Such inspiring incidents reinstate the honour and privilege, serving your nation can provide you. (Something you can never achieve through any other profession).

IQ: Do you have any regrets in life?

Meena: I could not become the Chief of Air Staff!

Jokes apart, I do regret not taking up the option of upgrading my short service commission to permanent or full-time service. The armed forces offer a unique and satisfying career path that do provide opportunities for personal growth, professional development, along with a strong sense of purpose. While my 11 years journey with Indian air force was undoubtedly rewarding, I do realize that there was still much more to learn and experience and I could contribute more to the organization.

Nonetheless, I am grateful for the unique experiences and lessons I gained during my tenure in the military, and I carry those with me as I steer across my post-service life.



Almost there as a Pilot!

IQ: What the top 3 life lessons you learnt from the military?

Meena: The military has taught me these three valuable life lessons:

- **Embrace Responsibility and Inspire Trust:** As a military person, it is very important to carry myself with grace, confidence, integrity, and a sense of responsibility. I categorically recognize that others look up to me as a role model, and I have to understand the weight of that influence. This is a big responsibility to uphold my image with honour, staying alert and attentive, as my actions can shape the perceptions and aspirations of those around me.
- **Embrace the Present Moment and Adaptability:** While planning for future and drawing lessons from the past are crucial, the military has taught me the importance of living in the present. Embrace the current moment, recognizing that it is the only time when I can make decisions and act. Moreover, the dynamic nature of military work emphasizes adaptability and flexibility. Being able to quickly adjust to changing circumstances and environments is a valuable skill that extends beyond military service.
- **Value Every Life and Relationship:** The military instils a deep appreciation for the value of life and relationships. It reminds me that my time on this earth is finite, urging me to cherish each moment spent with loved ones and comrades. By prioritizing meaningful connections and avoiding unnecessary conflicts, I can create a positive and supportive environment. I recognize that not all relationships may be harmonious, and in such cases, it is often best to maintain respectful distance rather than fostering negativity.

These lessons, imparted by the military, have shaped my outlook on life. By embodying responsibility, living in the present with adaptability, and valuing relationships, I have grown as an individual, fostering personal and professional growth in various aspects of life.

IQ: How did your military career help you become successful in your civilian career?

Meena: My military career has provided me with a solid and trustworthy platform, which has been instrumental in shaping my civilian career. The inherent honour and values instilled in me during my military service continue to shine through in everything I do. As I transitioned into

coaching and counselling, people naturally place greater trust in me because of my military background.

One of the greatest benefits of my military experience is the exposure it has given me to various fields and job profiles. I have had the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, including foreign country representatives, high-ranking administrative officials, and even famous sports personalities, film stars, and national award winners. Through collaborations with different departments like the police and interactions ranging from detainees in Tihar Jail to the labour class, my range of experiences has become incredibly broad.

Thanks to the military work profile, I could deliver multitude of lectures at various platforms. These exposures moulded my personality into one that is multi-faceted, flexible, and dynamic. I have faced and overcome challenges, all alone, in remote areas and locations. This has developed a sense of confidence and agility that enables me to tackle any task without fear or hesitation. Regardless of the situation or the people involved, I have reasonable confidence to deal with any scenario.

Another strong positive trait military has blessed me with is a deep sense of empathy and compassion. I got various opportunities to interact with diverse individuals and situations. Having gone through personal and professional hardships of life, my wisdom and insight in this regard fortified. This gave me a strong will and purpose of life to help others overcome the shackles of limiting beliefs, self-doubt, inner conflicts, and any other kinds of confusions in their lives. I have presently chosen to be in a career that makes me become people's accountability partner in their journey to success and happiness. Through my passion and profession in life coaching and counselling, I am able to understand people on a profound level and guide them towards their goals.

The trust I have built with my clients stems from the fact that I have personally experienced and successfully overcome hardships and challenges. This authenticity and credibility enable my one-on-one coaching sessions as well as public talks to stand out. I am committed to utilizing my military background and life experiences to make a positive impact on the lives of others, helping them find success and fulfilment.

IQ: What advice would you like to give to young girls aspiring for a military career today?**Meena:**

- **Understand the gravity of Military Service:** Be it men, women or any other gender, it's important that we understand that military is not just another organization offering you a career. Military seeks complete commitment and service on your part. You may have to sacrifice your comfort and personal lives for the mission or task at hand. Military targets will always take precedence over all your aspirations and personal goals.
- **Upskill:** This message is again not only for girls. You will have to keep enhancing your professional skills and expertise by learning and practicing more and more. Your weakness at any point may cost honour of our Nation, someone's life or maybe many lives, so, there is no excuse for poor performance at any level.
- **Learn to take a Stand for Yourself:** Now this one is definitely for girls. Living in closed stereotyped societies, many of us grow up believing that we always need a man to secure us and take decisions on our behalf. For any kind of achievement and even if we are looking good or not, we seek approval from men in our lives, not to mention financial and other big life decisions. Girls with this attitude should not even contemplate joining military forces. Seek advice and guidance from experts and your well-wishers, discuss issues fairly with your family and friends and come to well thought of conclusions. How will you justify your role in military that will need that you take a stand for your troops, create winning strategies with quick and precise decisions? So, first step first, begin with taking a stand for yourself and accept the responsibility for all your actions whether right or wrong.
- **Empower Yourself:** Yes, you will have to prove yourself 200% handling both professional and family commitments. We all have different life journeys. Some may get family support and others may not. Whatever be your state, live life respectably on your own terms, free from dependency on anyone. This way you will make your family proud and will be able to inspire, support and help others. Explore life to the fullest and discover your true potential. By doing so, you will understand and have faith in your own value and capabilities.

The military will empower you by treating you as an officer rather than solely focusing on your gender. Your mission and responsibilities will take precedence over your identity as a female. Embrace this unbiased platform that the military provides and soar high in your pursuits.

I wholeheartedly wish you the very best in your journey. Fly high, explore all that life has to offer, and live life to the fullest. The military will undoubtedly offer you opportunities and experiences that will shape you into an empowered and accomplished individual.

IQ: Any thing else you wish to share with our readers?

Meena: It has been difficult for women to enter industries that are dominated by men, such as the military, even in India. Although there have been many challenges and biases along the road, our will to achieve has never faltered. The pressure of society and cultural standards is one of the most difficult problems we've encountered. Society has often expected us to conform to traditional gender roles, limiting our aspirations to caregiving and domestic responsibilities. Breaking free from these expectations and pursuing careers in male-dominated fields has been met with scepticism and resistance from our communities and sometimes even our families.

Adding to the struggle, legal and policy barriers have stood in our path. Laws and regulations in some countries explicitly prohibited women from certain military roles or imposed restrictive conditions on our service. These obstacles have prevented us from reaching our full potential, restricting our prospects for development.

The absence or very less representation and role models has been one of the most depressing elements of this trip. Finding successful women in these fields who can act as role models has proven to be difficult. The absence of women in leadership positions within these fields has created doubts and made us question whether we truly belong there or not.

We've had to confront bias and discrimination throughout our careers. Preconceived notions about our physical abilities, emotional stability, and leadership potential have often overshadowed our accomplishments.

But despite all these difficulties, we have persisted. Along the way, we've disproved misconceptions while fighting for our rights and promoting change. We have fought against discriminatory laws, demanded reforms, and spread knowledge of the value of inclusion. We've moved closer to an inclusive and egalitarian society little by little.

The Indian Armed Forces are steadily providing more duties and roles to women. Numerous female officers have taken the initiative, overcome challenges, and made outstanding contributions to various military branches. Even if there is still more to be done, the progress we have already accomplished is the evidence of our resiliency and steadfast spirit.

Together, we are dismantling limitations and demonstrating our talents. I request all women to keep their spirits high and keep working towards excellence. You may be the next guiding star inspiring others to take up the challenge and be successful in any field of employment they choose, regardless of any gender stereotypes.

Jai Hind !



My Current Avatar of a Life Coach

Members Speak

As you know ForceNet E-Zine is the monthly e-magazine of Forces Network - the Network of the military veterans in the corporate. Each month we have a different theme for our magazine. For the Aug 2023 Issue we have selected the theme as **Women Warriors Winners** - as we wish to celebrate the women veterans.

We did sourcing of content for this Issue from women veterans.

The Next few pages are dedicated to few randomly picked Women Veterans in their own words.

Below are the questions asked:-

Q1: What was your motivation to join military service? - **Motivation**

Q2: What were the hesitations in your mind before you joined service? How did it eventually work out? - **Hesitation**

Q3: How would you describe your military career in hindsight? - **Career hindsight**

Q4: What was the proudest moment in your military career? **Proud moment**

Q5: One regret in your military career? **Regret**

Q6: What the top 3 life lessons you learnt from the military? **3 Lessons**

Q7: How did your military career help you become successful in your civilian career? **Military to civil**

Q8: What would your message be to aspiring girls seeking to make a career in the military? - **Message**

Q9: Misc: Any thing else you wish to share with our readers? - **Share**

Capt Kshama Bhalerao

Army

Army Air Defence - SSC(W)05

DOC - Mar 11

MOTIVATION

Pride of the uniform

HESITATIONS

I didn't have any hesitation, but my mother was a bit stressed as I am the only child. My father supported me, and I could serve in the Army.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

My military career was full of learning, adventure and gratitude.



PROUD MOMENT

I was selected to be an Instructor at my Alma Mater, OTA, with only 3 years of service. This was one of my proudest moments.

REGRET

I don't have any regrets.

MESSAGE

I would encourage all aspiring girls to join the military, as it gives us a lifetime of adventure in a safe and secure environment.

SHARE

I would encourage all the parents to encourage their children to explore a career in the military.

3 LESSONS

Discipline, hardwork and gratitude

MILITARY TO CIVIL

My military career helped me develop a disciplined lifestyle and also taught me the essentials of decision-making. These are important aspects of joining leadership roles in the corporate world.

CURRENTLY

Bank Of America
Corporate Security Lead for Mumbai

Sqn Ldr Priya Nalgundwar

Air Force

Flying - SSC-1
DOC - Dec 1994



MOTIVATION

Uniform, valour, and that it was the first time that women were considered for male-dominated roles.

HESITATIONS

There was no hesitation at all; the family supported it. I was a national-level sports person, so I was extremely fit. I was pursuing my PG in science, so qualification was taken care of. Thereafter, it was just a matter of enduring the arduous one and a half years of training, in which I became the first woman pilot in the Indian Air Force.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Unlearn, hate it, learn...learn..learn..enjoy it..excel in it..hang boots with satisfaction of being there and having done it all.

PROUD MOMENT

When I topped my course and made history, there were too many firsts that made me feel proud, viz., getting my paratrooper wings, competing with men and winning a gold medal at command level in shooting, leading my unit for high altitude trekking, and then some more.

REGRET

That it ended when I started enjoying it and that it was a continuous battle against gender bias.

SHARE

Yes, but 11 and a half years of enriched life cannot be contained in a few lines of the form.

3 LESSONS

Earn your respect, camaraderie before self accomplishment. country before self

MILITARY TO CIVIL

Military demeanour is an acquired persona that makes you stand out. The Air Force taught me dining etiquette, oratory skills, a zeal for life, a love for discipline, and sports. A civilian career needed me to blend in and understand the ways of working that are not rank-protected, so it's a different ball game all together.

MESSAGE

By all means, go ahead and conquer, but remember that it will demand a lot of personal sacrifices. Be prepared for them. Remember, there is a price for every prize!

CURRENTLY

Director
GOI

Capt Dipti Tiwari Shukla

Army

Signals - WSES 18
DOC - Sep 2000

MOTIVATION

Love for Uniform

HESITATIONS

No background knowledge of defence forces

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Lifetime learning that shapes the thought process and ability to bounce back in any situation.



PROUD MOMENT

When I led a team of 90 jawans in an independent training exercise and won the commendation card.

REGRET

Left too soon!

MESSAGE

Go for it; it changes the way we identify and live life.

SHARE

Defence officers have a unique ability to adapt to change faster.

3 LESSONS

1. Break down a process into smaller, more achievable steps.
2. Identify the deviation, if any, and find solutions for course correction.
3. Keep upgrading to the current environment.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

1. Ability to multitask.
2. Ability to work as a team member.
3. Communication skills.

CURRENTLY

JLL

Strategic Occupancy Planner



Women have stronger immune systems, then men

Women have better memory. ...

Women have better chances of surviving traumatic injuries. ...

Women bodies are structurally made for greater flexibility

Women have better muscle endurance

Women see 20% more color than men

Girls' brains generally mature 2 years earlier than boys

Sqn Ldr Anuradha GR

Air Force Flying - 3 SSC (W), First batch for helicopters
DOC - Dec 1995



MOTIVATION

A passion to don the uniform, be gainfully employed, and serve the country in a capacity that not many had trodden before.

HESITATIONS

I didn't have any prior knowledge about what I was getting into. I didn't know anyone in the military profession. It was like taking a blind plunge. The only solace was that it was a government job and, hence, would be secure. After joining, every step was like an adventure into the unknown. The experience of flying, the work environment, the adjustments that were made to accommodate women pilots, the relationship with fellow military personnel, colleagues, coursemates, seniors, subordinates, the families... It was an experience in itself that I cherish to this day.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

A valuable memory and experience of life that groomed my personality is something many people look up to even today.

PROUD MOMENT

Standing atop the Red Fort with PM Vajpayee and hoisting the Tiranga of our nation on August 15, 1998, watched by my friends and family. This was the first time a woman officer was assigned this task.

REGRET

I would have loved to continue my service on permanent commission. But this option wasn't available then.

SHARE

I got the opportunity to experience para jumping and snow skiing while in service. All in all, it's a profession that I'm proud to have chosen.

3 LESSONS

Service before self.
Integrity is paramount.
Work-life balance without compromising on the first two.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

It gave me a personality and a platform of respect and recognition that made people look up and take notice. My experience as a military manager helped me develop a systematic approach to achieving the tasks that I set out for myself.

MESSAGE

Only join if you have the passion to serve the nation in the manner necessary and will stand by your commitment through the ups and downs of your career.

CURRENTLY

Self employed
Social Work Environment



Savitribai Phule is heralded as one of India's foremost female leaders. She placed high importance on female education and together with husband Jyotirao Phule, opened 18 schools for girls, as reported by Indian Today

Capt Shalini Nair

Army

AOC - WSES-02

DOC - Aug 1993

MOTIVATION

Two reasons. I wanted to prove to everyone that I was capable of so much more and my birthmark didn't make me any less. Also, my father, who was an Air force pilot, wanted to see one of his children in uniform.

HESITATIONS

I was a little hesitant about my physical fitness as I was never an outdoor person. But attempting and clearing the obstacles during SSB filled me with belief in myself.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Trailblazer. If you were to ask my college friends, I would have been the last candidate for joining the Indian Army. But I not only joined, but won the gold medal for the best lady cadet and also the trophy during the YOs as the best student officer.



PROUD MOMENT

Saluting my father.

REGRET

That we were not eligible for permanent commission

MESSAGE

Don't treat it as just another career option.

SHARE

The one decision taken in a moment changed the course of my life. I wouldn't have been the confident and self-assured person I am today if I hadn't joined the Army.

3 LESSONS

Never under estimate yourself,
believe in your team,
go the extra mile.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

I learnt discipline, time management, man management, keeping my calm in a crisis and adaptability in the Army, which helped me to outshine in my civilian career also.

CURRENTLY

Head - Student Support
Symbiosis Centre for Distance
Education

According to Nobel Prize, only 48 women have received the Nobel Prize from 1901 till date.



Capt Gauri Mahajan

ARMY

Signals - WSES-10
DOC - Sep 1997



MOTIVATION

The glamour of uniform and the pride and respect associated with it. Also the zeal to choose an uncommon and unique career for myself.

HESITATIONS

Not me, but my parents had lot of inhibitions. Being from a small city, induction of Women in Army was a very new and uncommon concept for them. They felt that this field was meant only for men, and women should not venture out here. But after I joined the academy and gradually got under the skin of a fauji, they were the proudest and happiest parents.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

The best years of my life. I was totally transformed from a typical delicate feminine person into a tougher, more disciplined, polished officer. The hardships of the academy, strict discipline, lots of restrictions, infinite rules to be followed in the unit became a part of life and started appearing normal, just because the brass on the shoulder and the pride of the Rank before my name outshines all of them. The army brought out the best in me, and there could be nothing prouder than being a part of the most prestigious force, the Indian Army. I still feel nostalgic and wish I could reverse the wheels of time and go back to the amazing Army world once again.

PROUD MOMENT

The first one was the day I got pips on my shoulder and walked out of the academy as an officer. After that, every moment, every single day was a proud day for me. During those times, officers and troops in units were not used to having women officers around. Being the first woman officer in the first two units, my CO/Cdr and colleagues had lots of inhibitions as they had no experience working with a woman officer earlier. At the same time, acceptance by troops was a challenge. But the Army taught me to face challenges and come out victorious. With the required hard work and integrity, I could manage to make all inhibitions of my colleagues vanish. They all treated me at par with the gentlemen officers and I became an integral part of my unit. It was indeed another proud moment for me. I also got a letter of appreciation from the DCSO for my first briefing in the Ops room, as a YO.

REGRET

The only regret ,which I have till date, is that I stepped out of my boots and hung my uniform too early. I wish I could undo that.

3 LESSONS

Perseverance
Resilience
Selflessness

MILITARY TO CIVIL

The Academy training teaches us everything that distinguishes us from the rest of the world. All the officer-like qualities which the Army inculcated in me, have helped me meet and sometimes exceed the expectations of my superiors in my previous and current organisations. Everytime someone walks up to me and says "Ma'am, look at the way you carry yourself, and from your way of working, one can easily make out you are from the defense forces. We really appreciate you".

MESSAGE

Nothing can be more courageous and prestigious than to be a Woman in uniform and be a part of the most glamorous and respectable force. Forces teach you to break all the barriers and achieve the unachievable. Go for it.

SHARE

I have been a part of the Indian Army for a short span of time, but the beauty of the force is that you may be there for a short while but you remain a part of it forever. Once, a fauji is always a fauji and that is the only motivating factor that kept me going despite all odds. I wholeheartedly thank the force for giving me an opportunity to be a part of it and cherish my military service for the rest of my life.

CURRENTLY

Sr. Manager Security
Bank Of Baroda

Capt Reenu Sharma Khurana

Army

AOC - WSES-04

DOC - Aug 1994

MOTIVATION

It was a fulfillment of my childhood passion to don the uniform and challenge the gender dictated mindset.

HESITATIONS

None, and that clarity paved the path ahead for me to be a pioneer, be it the trans-Himalayan trekking expedition from Khardung La to Pithoragarh in 1995 or being the first lady officer to be posted back to OTA Chennai as Directing Staff in July 1997.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Daring to dream and chasing it with passion and persistence till the goal is manifested.



PROUD MOMENT

As a platoon commander, walking the talk and instilling self-belief in the lady cadets, including veer naari who decided to don the olive greens that they had it in them to lead their men, both in peace or at war.

REGRET

That the organisation didn't offer me a level playing field to compete with the gentlemen officers and grow in the organisation.

MESSAGE

Be a part of it only if and when one can put service before self. That is a hallmark of a true leader. Gender limitations are the stories of our mind, be it at the policy formulation stage or implementation phase.

SHARE

The sense of achievement of fulfilling my childhood dream of being an army officer, continues to inspire and reinvent myself time and again. In my present professional innings as a life and self-mastery coach, I am closely working with the students and young adults to nurture the seed of I'AM MAGIC within themselves as they step into adulthood. The above enables them to make informed choices in their lives and realise their inner strength and value system.

3 LESSONS

Dare to dream

Take the trail which hasn't been traversed upon and leave a path behind

The might of the human mind allows us to re-write our own destiny

MILITARY TO CIVIL

The dynamic nature of employment enforced my conviction to live life on my own terms, nurtured with humility and gratitude. It enabled me to publish my first fiction novella L'affaire Ladakh in Oct 2020. A hiatus of 5 years to focus on our children's education, offered me the confidence and self-belief to re-ignite my aspirations of being a life coach and torch bearer of conscious living, through my enterprise INDUS iNSPIRES.

CURRENTLY

Founder

Indus Inspires

Cdr Lilly Alex

NAVY

Logistics - 01 Naval
academy
DOC - Sep 2005



MOTIVATION

My Father was a Sergeant in the IAF and my first motivation was to be in uniform someday just like him. Slowly, I inculcated an organized lifestyle with discipline and made it a way of life. I wanted a life that was less ordinary.

HESITATIONS

I was a very shy girl and was hesitant to open up or talk to unknown people. Also, my physical fitness was not up to the mark. Therefore, I started working on these aspects and made sure that I was ready!

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Joining the Navy was one of the best decisions of my life. The people you serve with, the experiences you get, and the purpose you serve make it more than worthwhile.

PROUD MOMENT

There have been a few proud moments.. But the proudest I would say was to clear the Psychologist Course (DIPR) as the first SSC Lady officer in the Navy.

REGRET

I wish I had an opportunity to go onboard ships.

SHARE

Each story/journey is different, but every story matters!!

3 LESSONS

Be prepared always. You need to be quick in thinking and on your feet.
Fitness is a lifestyle
Integrity

MILITARY TO CIVIL

Specialization in the recruitment process of SSB has given me the skills to transition to the HR role in another Govt organisation. The experience gained in various aspects of logistics and recruitment has made my profile fit for my second career. I joined IIT Hyderabad as a Deputy Registrar on 08 Aug 2019 and then moved to C-DOT as Manager HR in May 2022.

MESSAGE

The Military is not for everyone, but if your heart is in it.. then just Do it!! It was the best career choice I've ever made.

CURRENTLY

Manager HR
Centre for Development of Telematics



Captain of the Indian women's national cricket team, Mithali Raj has scored five centuries in One Day International matches throughout her career, a first for any Indian women cricketer.

Maj Sunita Menon

Army

Engrs - WS-29
DOC - Mar 2007



MOTIVATION

I am patriotic, and for my younger self, this was the best way to do it. Be a part of the forces, rather than wishful thinking. The Kargil war also had some contribution in shaping my perspective when I was a teen.

HESITATIONS

I did not have any apprehensions, my parents did. They were worried if it would be safe - in hindsight, it seems rational as I was the first one in the family and extended family to join the forces.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

The best enriching years of my life, and an experience I would go for if I had to make the decision again.

PROUD MOMENT

It was during a flood relief exercise wherein my team and I were able to rescue villagers in the thick of rain and uncertainty.

REGRET

I have no regrets. My experiences have made me stronger. In hindsight, I feel a lady officer can greatly benefit from having lady mentors when they join the organisation.

MESSAGE

Put your best foot forward every time. Do the best you can at all times. Lean into the women officers you will be stationed with.

SHARE

Understand what your interests / inclinations are, and explore this while being in the armed forces - there is no dearth of resources for those who wish to learn.

3 LESSONS

Discipline and respecting time.
honesty, courage.
ability to stand for what you decide.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

I was able to see the best of both worlds - I struggled for initial years after leaving the army, but I am a lot more comfortable now. I think being humble is imperative - as is approaching things with an open mind and keenness to learn.

CURRENTLY

VP - HR
JP Morgan & Chase



Saina Nehwal attain the world no. 1 ranking in 2015, thereby becoming the only female player from India and overall the second Indian player - after Prakash Padukone - to achieve this feat.

Maj (Dr) Nupur Gupta ARMY

Engrs - WS -10
DOC - Sep 1997



MOTIVATION

Charm of uniform and such kar guzarne ki tamanna!

HESITATIONS

None, but lot of society and parental apprehensions.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Great

PROUD MOMENT

Paving way for coming generations

REGRET

None

3 LESSONS

Discipline

Work hard & party harder

Live the moment

MILITARY TO CIVIL

I am , who I am because of the uniform.

MESSAGE

Be your best version and compete.

SHARE

Life story

CURRENTLY

Dean Academics

IMS Noida

In ancient Indian culture, women were treated as equal to men, and there was no discrimination on the bases of gender, instead of that, women were honoured by society. And society at the time considered women as 'Janani' which means mother. They used to enjoy their full basic rights where they were free to receive an education, at that time, the wives of the Rishis could willing to take part in spiritual activities with their husbands, they were also known as the Ardhangini (better half). Women in Indian history have gone through two things in their life: subjection and deliverance. With the passage of time, their positions might have changed but in the Vedic era, they were a complete symbol of protector and caretaker of mortality and ideals.



Capt Sukhwinder Kaur

Army

Ordnance - WS-04

DOC - Aug 1994

MOTIVATION

My father (Maratha LI Officer) and the novelty of being a woman in uniform

HESITATIONS

I felt that this role was cut out for me and the answer "yes" resounded loud in my mind to the question: "Do you have it in you?"

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

The best 5 years of my life and I found myself discovering so many aspects of myself, learning so many new skills. Would be happy to reverse my decision and rejoin.



PROUD MOMENT

Being part of Op Vijay, and mobilizing to Rajouri sector, being 4 months pregnant, setting up an ordnance detachment there, completely in tents.

REGRET

Couldn't be part of an active Frontline action.

MESSAGE

It's not a career. It's a way of life. Choose it if you are looking for a quality lifestyle and a life out of the ordinary.

SHARE

The army never leaves you, you can leave the uniform. The mindset of an Officer is the mindset of an outstanding leader, who walks the talk. It's an experience of a lifetime.

3 LESSONS

Leading from the front
An attitude of "can do, will do"
Managing within given resources.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

- Planning
- Delegation
- Communication
- Self confidence
- Attitude of a winner

CURRENTLY

VP strategic programs and business management
Citi solutions India



Egypt was way more democratic than many other kingdoms during the ancient times. Despite the gender, any child of a ruler could inherit the throne. The rights of men and women were almost equal. Moreover, the family line in ancient Egypt was drawn from the mother's side, not the father's.

Capt Subbalakshmi

ARMY

Ordnance - WS -01
DOC - Mar 1993



MOTIVATION

It was a great honour for me to serve the nation

HESITATIONS

I did not have any hesitations as such.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

It made me the person I am today, confident and daring.

PROUD MOMENT

On being commissioned in the first batch.

REGRET

No, I don't have any regrets.

3 LESSONS

Face any situation life presents you with a calm and steady mind.

Appreciate and evaluate life in a positive way.

Confident of yourself to face any problem that can come across in life.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

I am a home maker. But the training and service in the Army gave me the confidence to support my husband in the most difficult situations life has given so far.

MESSAGE

It is one of the best careers and it makes a person confident to face life as it comes.

SHARE

Be yourself and do your bit using best of your abilities.

There are very few Matriarchy societies in the world. Few of them are :-

The Mosuo women of China's.

The BriBri people are an indigenous tribe of Costa Rica

Umoja Tribe of Kenya

Minangkabau people of Indonesia

The Akan of Ghana

The Khasi Tribes of Meghalaya

Nair's of Kerala

A Matriarchy society system is where mother or a female elder has absolute authority over the family group; One or more women (as in a council) exert a similar level of authority over the community as a whole. The property is handed down the same female line.



Capt Shanthi S

Army

Ordance - WS-01
DOC - Mar 1993

MOTIVATION

To do something that would make a difference to society.

HESITATIONS

I went with an open mind. My family was convinced, considering they knew the determination I had.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

One which taught me confidence and face life head-on.



PROUD MOMENT

Being from the first batch and in a way, a reminder to folks in the corporate field.

REGRET

None

MESSAGE

One day at a time and just one life.

SHARE

Never stop the thirst to learn. More on <https://yourstory.com/2022/03/capt-shanthi-s-infosys-corporate-world-upskilling>.

3 LESSONS

Confidence
Professional etiquettes
Work ethics and culture

MILITARY TO CIVIL

Gave me an overall experience and, hence, I could take up any role.

CURRENTLY

Program Director Education at
Infosys Foundation
Infosys Ltd

Capt Gurmeet Kaur

ARMY

ASC - WS -09
DOC - Mar 1997



MOTIVATION

I was honoured to receive the President's Award for Best Guide. In Rashtrapati Bhawan, while receiving the award, the ADC's uniform fascinated me. My NCC journey from a small town in Chhattisgarh to Rajpath was the motivation.

HESITATIONS

Coming from a small town and a mid-income business family, a Hindi-medium school, and being unable to speak English were the hesitations. I walked into Zila Sainik Board, took guidance from an officer, started working as guided, gave SSB in Hindi, and got through. Though the journey was quite challenging.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

It changed my life altogether. From a mediocre school student to a courageous and risk-taking individual, it has been the bedrock of my professional outlook and ethics. The training and exposure in the Army honed my leadership skills and confidence.

PROUD MOMENT

Winning multiple national shooting medals and getting colours awards for shooting.

REGRET

Did not have the option of a permanent commission.

3 LESSONS

If there is a will, there is a way.

Life is short, so make the most of it.

Give your best and don't bother about the outcome.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

Perseverance, meticulous planning and adaptable execution, good interpersonal communication, and openness to divergent viewpoints are some of the professional qualities that helped me succeed in the Education sector, and the credit goes to learning from my military career.

MESSAGE

This message of mine is especially for girls from small towns. If I can reach where I am today, what stops you?

"Aap ke andar agar kuch kar gujarne ka jazba hai, toh koi mukam mushkil nahi. Swayam par bharosa rakhe aur apna karm puri shiddat se karen. Safalta apke kadam chumegi."

SHARE

Class B and C city students have a fire in their belly. They just need proper guidance and the opportunity to shine. In whatever manner possible, we should extend support to these students.

CURRENTLY

Head Security

Ashoka University

Cmdr Madhavi Patri Subramanian

Navy

ATC - 1995

DOC - Aug 1995



MOTIVATION

Wanted to do something different, and serve the country

HESITATIONS

Whether I am good enough to make the cut. And how will the male bastion treat women? Eventually, I was just myself in the interview, and SSB gave my best to the service. It worked out wonderfully well.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

Very fulfilling and inspiring

PROUD MOMENT

I topped my professional courses and interservice courses training with the Indian Air Force, being from the Navy. It is a great feeling for oneself, the base, and the service when you complete interservices professional courses! Another proud moment was when I was in the tower during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks when the helicopter carrying commandos was launched.

REGRET

That I couldn't serve in the Navy until my retirement age. Being a short-service commissioned officer, I served for only 14 years!

MESSAGE

Just be yourself; it is about the person, not the gender. If you are right for the role, you will make the cut through SSB. Thereafter, continue to play on your own strengths and keep improving your weaknesses.

SHARE

The military is not just a responsibility; it teaches the way to lead one's life. Join the military, not for the sake of the forces or country, but for your own sake, to become a better version of yourself!

3 LESSONS

1. Professionalism pays. If you are a thorough professional, gender doesn't matter at all.
2. When you motivate people right, they won't mind giving up their lives for you.
3. A leader is very different from a manager; the former is about others, the latter is more about his or her current role.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

I can motivate people and win their trust easily. And I stand by my word, and people who trust me. This helped me quickly raise up the levels in the corporate world, where, being in sales and BD, I won many clients and shared a strong bond with colleagues.

CURRENTLY

CEO

Arogya Aishwarya

Maj Ushasree Kumar

ARMY

AOC - WS -01

DOC - Mar 1993



MOTIVATION

Dad's Uniform, Dad mentioning it time and again in public—If I had a son, I would have sent him to the defence forces, and Dr. Kiran Bedi's (IPS) go-getter style & attitude.

HESITATIONS

I had no hesitation at all, and I had told everyone when I was a child that I would wear the uniform one day in the fastest possible way. At that time, the fastest method was AFMC. I couldn't crack, so I decided to crack IPS like Dr. Kiran Bedi, but fortunately, during my 3rd year of BSC, I got a chance to crack SSB for the Army's first women batch in the country.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

In hindsight, my military career as a woman officer was a journey of challenges, growth, and breaking barriers. I never had the feeling that I was entering a traditionally male-dominated environment, as my male counterparts, even during my school and college days, only helped me become the best amongst the girls. I was part of the historic moment when 25 girls pioneered to showcase their skills and capabilities in demanding military environments. I found immense fulfilment in my military career, as it made me a multitasking hero. It's only because of my military career that I became a good leader, a perfect trainer, a good human being with moral values, a good wife, a good daughter-in-law, a good mother, and above all, the best citizen of the nation. The camaraderie and bonds forged with my military colleagues are invaluable, and I will always cherish the shared experiences and sense of purpose we had, especially during Operation Kargil and Op-Parakram.

PROUD MOMENT

When I picked up my Field Major Rank during Operation Parakram

REGRET

My name was sent for a commendation card by three different units and three different COs for developing software packages for three different units on three different subjects where I was serving, but I never got one. Efforts were certainly recognised at the unit level by each of the COs, but SHABASHI, in the form of an appreciation card, was never received from the top.

SHARE

I copied a lady called Dr. Kiran Bedi, IPS, the first lady IPS of the country, and I too went on to become the first lady Army Officer of Andhra Pradesh, belonging to the first 25 lady Army Officers of the country. The thirst for being first made me the founder Director of Telangana Social Welfare Residential Armed Forces Preparatory College for Women, the first and only college in India for all marginalised girls in Telangana where free defence training is given for NDA, CDS, and AFCAT along with graduation in BSc, BA, and B.Com. I now serve as OIC Service Preparatory Wing with the first of its kind residential school in Delhi called Shaheed Bhagat Singh Armed Forces Preparatory School, where A-Z training is given free of charge to defence aspirants in Delhi, especially for the NDA.

3 LESSONS

Never give up

Every problem has a solution

To make self believe that I AM THE BEST

MILITARY TO CIVIL

My military career taught me to be a role model for my subordinates; hence, in the civil street, I adhere to strict discipline and exhibit professionalism in my conduct, appearance, and interactions. I always made it a point to prioritise the organisation for which I work. My endurance, strength, and agility to perform duties in civil life are due to the physical fitness regime taught during my military career. Today, I am the best PD trainer for all my students who are defence aspirants in my school or college. A military career taught me to handle stress, manage emotions, and stay composed during challenging and traumatic situations only due to my military career exposure for 10 years.

MESSAGE

You have the strength and potential to excel. Embrace your uniqueness and believe in yourself. Seek mentorship and surround yourself with positive role models. Work hard, stay committed, and never stop learning. Be proud of who you are and contribute to breaking barriers. Step forward with courage and make a difference.

CURRENTLY

Officer In charge for Services Preparatory Wing

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Armed Forces Preparatory School

Wing Cdr Shruti Chauhan

Air Force

Flying - 177 PC/ 24 SSC (W)
DOC - Jun 2006



MOTIVATION

Love for Uniform and disciplined life.

HESITATIONS

No hesitations at all. Completed 10 years of the initial term and took a 5-year extension too.

CAREER - HINDSIGHT

A wonderful roller Coster ride.

PROUD MOMENT

Have been part of various missions that cannot be disclosed.

REGRET

No regret at all.

MESSAGE

You can wear boots and heels with equal grace and honour! No problem is big enough to quit, and there is always a solution, no matter what. Do NOT DOUBT YOUR CAPABILITIES.

SHARE

I participated in Mrs. India Inc. 2021 and won the title of Mrs. India Galaxy 2021. I was to represent India on a world platform in the Mrs. India Galaxy 2021 pageant (which was to be held in the USA), but due to the pandemic, the pageant did not go through.

3 LESSONS

Never quit.

Every problem or situation has more than one solution.

You do not grow by stepping on somebody else, but by helping others grow.

MILITARY TO CIVIL

It gave me confidence that nothing is too difficult to deal with, made me more resilient, and made me a confident speaker who could voice my opinions without fear. and positive attitude to help each achieve their goals.

CURRENTLY




Pilot
Inter Globe Aviation Ltd

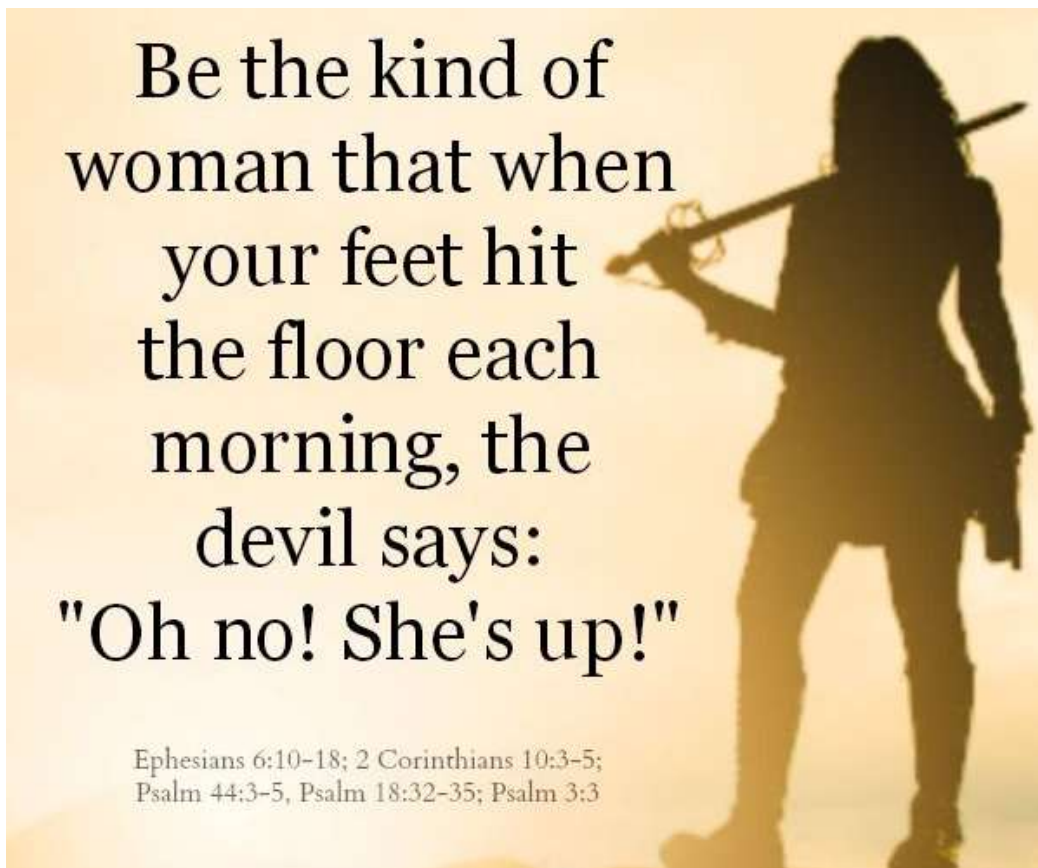
Due to Constraints, we were not able to feature the below women warriors.

	Name	Service/Branch	Course/DO C	Current Position	Current Organisation
	Capt Shweta Misra	Army - AOC	WS6 - Aug 95	Author/Blogger	Self Employed
	Lt Cmdr Rajeshwari Kori	Navy - Logistics	Women Special Entry-04 - Aug 95	Commandant of Civil Defence Staff college	Govt of Maharashtra
	Cmdr Varuna Ektare	Navy - Executive ATC	NOC 8 - Jan 09	AVP (Portfolio Delivery)	CITICorp India
	Cmdr Sarita Nagayach	Navy - Logistics	Naval Orientation course -05 - Aug 07	Operations Manager	Amazon
	Wg Cmdr Seema Sharma	Air Force - Logistics	SSC - 32 - Dec -08	PwC LLP	Veteran Intern

	Name	Service/Branch	Course/DO C	Current Position	Current Organisation
	Capt Ruchi Maini	Army - AOC	WS8 - Aug 96	Associate Director	Edtech Company
	Wg Cmdr Sneha Y	Air Force- Flying	SSC - 27 - Dec 07	SLO for Womens Cricket team	BCCI
	Lt Cdr Seema Rani Sharma	Navy - Aviation	NOC 77 - Jul 08	Manager TMG	UST Product Engineering
	Sq Ldr Poonam Sandhu	Air Force - Aeronautical Engineering (Electrical)	SSC- 54 - Jan 13	Manager	Larsen and Toubro Defence
	Capt Anjana Bhaduria	Army - ASC	WSES - 01 - Mar 93	Soft Skill Trainer	Free Lancer
	Lt Col Roli Chauhan	Army - AOC	WS - 16 - Sep 00		

	Name	Service/Branch	Course/DO C	Current Position	Current Organisation
	Capt Neesha Dhankar	Army - AOC	WS8 - Aug 96	MD	LR gp of Institutions
	Lt Col Pooja Gupta	Army - AOC	WS-19 - Mar 02	Past Life Regression Therapist & Akashic Records Reader	Holistic Healing
	Capt Swapna Datta	Army - AOC	WS -01 - Mar 93	Associate Professor	Globsyn Business School
	Lt Col Himanshi Singh	Army - AOC	WS- 11 - Mar 98	Founder	Self Employed
	Sqn Ldr Sangeeta Gupta Nair	Air Force - Adm	SSC-01 - Jun 93	Global Head of BD&AM, Biopharmaceuticals	Sandoz AG
	Maj Shweta Khanzode	Army - Signals	WS - 25 - Mar 05	Associate manager - DPN	Incture Technologies Private Limited

	Name	Service/Branch	Course/DO C	Current Position	Current Organisation
	Surg Lt Cdr Ambika Nautiyal	Navy - Medical	Mar - 12	Pursuing MBA	IIM Ahmedabad
	Wng Cdr Priyanka Hooda	Air Force Logistics	SSC- 33 - Jun 09	Vice President Senior Program Specialist	BNY MELLON
	Lt Col Ipsa Ratha	Army - ASC	WS -15 - Mar 00	Director Talent Acquisition, North, East and South India	JLL





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