

F RCENET

E-ZINE

Magazine for military veterans in the corporate
February 2022, Volume IV, Issue 02

LEAP OF FAITH

*A New Outlook
on
Military 2 Corporate
Transition*

*Tête-à-tête With
Spiritual Leader
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Founder Art Of Living*



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FORCENET

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

I am happy to share the month's Edition. We have chosen this month's theme to be - **Leap of Faith** - something that is innate to members of Forces Network.

Leap of Faith means, an act of believing in or attempting something whose existence or outcome cannot be proved or known. Mankind had been taking this Leap of Faith from ages and across generations and with each leap gaining incredible success and progress, whether be it in Arts, warfare, technology or even politics.

The conception of Forces Network Group by itself was a Leap of Faith. An idea of making a Network which would bring a transformation in a defence officer's life by mutually helping one another in a sense of the community. The support extended well beyond merely finding civilian employment upon exit from the Forces but also on the civvie street and in personal matters as well.

When we a soldier sheds his or her uniform to undertake a the next career in the civil it is definitely a leap of faith as well. To succeed in the Military to Corporate (M2C) Transition it is imperative that one has the right mindset. Towards that end this is a journey of transformation. That is why for this Edition our team decided to take guidance from The Founder of Art of Living (AOL) Sri Sri Ravi Ravi Shankar who transforms people's lives and our team interviewed Guruji. What he has shared are real pearls of wisdom. Just to give you a glimpse sample this statement from him **"Faith is a character of your own consciousness which blossoms from within you"**. All those to who read and understand the import of his answers would be immensely benefited. Suggest read the interview, read it again and try to digest the meaning behind.

Thereafter you can leap with confidence.

Leap of Faith helps you to conquer the fear within and unlock your true potential. Hence every human being owes it to oneself to keep taking leaps of faiths in their lifetime.

Happy reading! Please keep the feedback coming.

Until next time, cheers to Forces Network - **the Network that works.**



Yours Leaper,

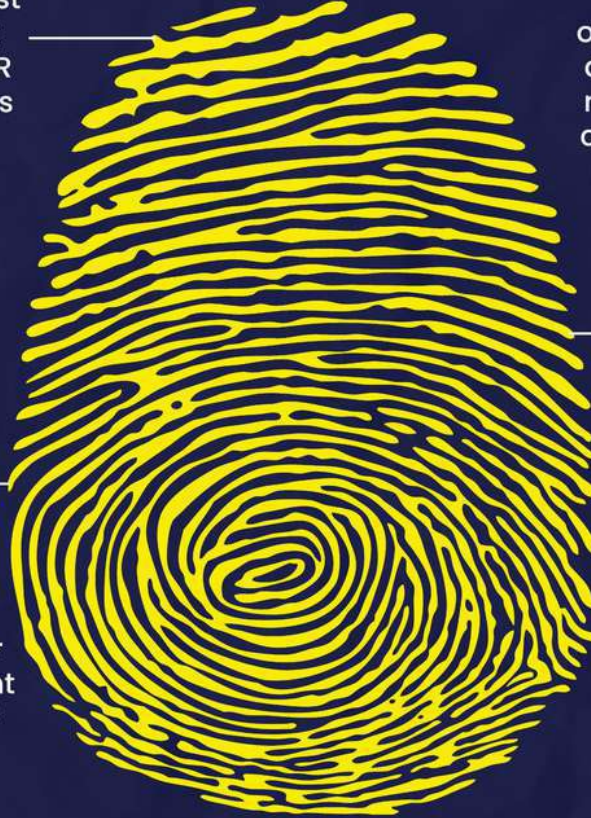
Capt. Rajesh Nair

What is the best way to invest money for PMR retiree at 45yrs of age.

I am a serving officer in Indian Navy and need details on retirement planning considering the post retirement startup idea.

Can you advice on suggestions for investing retirement corpus optimally?

Regarding the pensions, should I commute or not?



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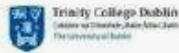
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[A NOTE FOR THE READERS](#)

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

For the ease of providing a 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. The facts and opinions appearing in the articles thus do not reflect the views of Forces Network, and Forces Network does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.

Star of The Month

A Forces Network Star of month is a member of the Forces Network who has gone on to achieve glory in the his/her corporate/civilian avatar. The aim of this series is not just to celebrate our successes from the veteran community, which unfortunately we do not do enough, but also to inspire others. The ultimate goal is to set up a virtuous self-sustaining cycle of inspiration leading to more successes in turn inspiring many more.

IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY K SHRIWAS

Col (Dr) Atul Kumar, psc was commissioned in Army Ordnance Corps in June 1988. During his 31 years of distinguished career he has tenanted varied regimental, staff and operational assignments. He is an alumnus of DSSC Wellington and possesses Masters in Science, Computers and Business Management as well as Doctorate in Strategic Studies. He was awarded COAS and VCOAS Commendation Cards for contribution in the field of ERP implementation in the Army. He is a voracious reader and an avid writer. Currently he is working in Deloitte India as Director Enterprise Technology.



Uday: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Army, and your subsequent Army career?

Atul: I was born in Lucknow and was raised by my mother in Delhi. I studied in schools like BBPS and KV and did my graduation from Delhi University before clearing CDS exam and joining IMA in Jun 1986.

In army I was fortunate to have been given opportunities in varied projects and tasks. I did my infantry attachment with a wonderful unit - 11 DOGRA in North East and Rajasthan learning immensely from that association. Thereafter from rendering ammunition/explosive related advice to law enforcement agencies in 1992 blast cases to participating in Counter Insurgency operations in Punjab, Assam, J&K and Nagaland to serving in Special Forces to fighting enemy in Kargil I had an exposure to true army professional tasks. Thereafter managing a huge supply chain for army operational logistics in multiple locations at different levels and then automating the same with cutting edge technology with number of firsts in the history of IT enabled supply chain in armed forces gave me a platform to hone my skills for implementing my knowledge gained through various degrees obtained over my career span.

In a nut shell my 31 years of army life enabled me with theoretical and practical skills set in HR management, Financial Management, Supply Chain Management, Organisational Change Management, IT management, Project Management, Event Management and Crisis Management. Having been posted to 19 different places in peace, operations and war, I had exposure to all kinds of pressure situations and managerial challenges requiring out of box solutions and innovative ideas.

This resulted in a situation where my leadership, managerial and innovative skills became my core competency facilitating my on boarding in corporate sector. The experience of leading a light house multi Crores ERP project Pan India on cutting edge technology platforms is a differentiating aspect facilitating me in various projects which I am handling now in Deloitte.



The Phase L:to R - IMA'87; Punjab'89; Op Vijay Kargil'99; Glacier' 2000; Command at Ranchi'2010; Corporate'2021

Uday: Give us an understanding about your role and what you are presently engaged in?

Atul: I am in a leadership role as a Director in Enterprise Technology & Performance service area and report to SAP Service Line Practice Leader for Deloitte India. I am involved in complete spectrum of activities from initial discovery and advisory conversation with a prospective client to creating a value proposition to delivery / PMO and contract management in all digital transformation projects specially those involving SAP application as a solution platform. I provide technology support and guidance to all such engagements driving multiple teams of consultants and managers involved in the same. In addition there are mentoring and asset creation responsibilities around technology innovations and tools and accelerators for on-prem and cloud solutions specific to Digital Supply Chain.

Uday: How did you prepare yourself for the military to corporate transition?

Atul: In the year 2018 after having completed the biggest implementation of SAP in defence services I started feeling that probably now Army may not be able to utilise my services in similar challenging assignments and I wasn't ready for a desk job pending retirement. With retirement just 18 months away I decided I must time my transition to corporate in the month of Dec 2018.

The decision to take a pre mature retirement - PMR, is never easy especially after 31 years of an enriched career span. One is taken care of so much in the armed forces that one starts feeling very protected and comfortable in the umbrella provided. So the uncertainty staring in the face because of such transition is the biggest fear to overcome. Complete support infrastructure and the ecosystem of being able to navigate for each and every aspect of professional as well as personal life is very difficult to be given up. One is not so sure of being able to come up to expectations of a civil career requirements. While monetary situation is not worrisome due to retirement funds - unless one has family responsibilities, one is apprehensive about the surety of job and salary post such transition. The transition removes you from the comfort zone and professional ecosystem you have grown accustomed to in three decades.

Therefore it is more of a **Leap Of Faith**. I was able to make this transition with the help of my family's support based on due diligence and detailed thoughts covering complete spectrum of factors. To be frank I didn't do anything much to prepare other than apply for Pre Mature Retirement - PMR, make administrative arrangements to settle the family outside cantonment and make some bank loan arrangements to tide over initial months without a salary as pension / retirement funds take 3-4 months to arrive in case of PMR.

Uday: What were the challenges faced during your transition? How did you overcome the challenges?

Atul: As I said earlier the biggest challenge was overcoming my own fears and resistance to change. The demons in mind had to be fought and a detailed analysis of pros and cons of the decision done. Having decided to go ahead I had to plan and time the transition with due thought to organisation, myself, my family and probability of getting a suitable assignment in civil life. It's not easy to get a reasonably paying job in choice of work domain immediately after the transition. Mostly military personnel look around and try to obtain a letter of offer from a suitable employer before applying for PMR. In my case I followed my gut feeling and went ahead without having an offer in hand because I was sure about my capability, my needs and my desire to spend some quality time with myself in travelling the country/abroad. Luckily for me there was no challenge from the organisation which cleared my application in quick time. So the challenge is mostly internal decision making and timing of transition.

Uday: How has been your experience in the corporate domain so far?

Atul: Life in Corporate is similar to Army life in some ways while being entirely different cattle of fish in others.

In Army Leadership aspect is more dominant than while in corporate management traits are more pronounced.

While in Army Leadership style is more towards Autocratic, in Corporate it more of a blend of Autocratic, Participative and Laisse-Faire.

As far as work culture is concerned Army life is deeply rooted in discipline, rigid hierarchy, unflinching loyalty and unquestioned (more or less) obedience. Career progression is limited after a particular rank due to steep pyramidal structure. In corporate life the hierarchy is less rigid and knowledge based leadership and growth is a given. The organisation is more flattish and responsibilities and accountability are distributed unlike in Army where a vertical organisation structure makes the buck stop at Commanding Officer's desk. In Corporate life Innovative ideas, demonstrated academic brilliance and diligence is awarded with accolades and career growth. Opportunities for personal and professional development and exposure to different environment are provided as structured talent grooming process.

Compensation packages in corporate have an edge over Army however overall quality of life is Army is much better if one ignores cash in hand issue.

Uday: Academy Training teaches us a lot and it prepares us for our future life. What has been your biggest take away which has been really a big lesson even as you take up challenges in corporate life?

Atul: Most of the management techniques taught in academies are utilised in military life under immense pressure of survival and reputation. Hence military personnel bring with them certain inherent values so very desired in corporate like loyalty, sincerity, integrity, honesty and diligence with least botheration about personal life.

We are more logical in approaching any problem and have a sequential thinking thereby breaking down the problem statement into sub sets and tackling them individually for a comprehensive resolution of the problem. This quality differentiates us from others in a big way. The habitual process of delegation with responsibility, accountability and importantly authority is a game changer.

Uday: How important is it to understand your own expertise and then to work towards upskilling in that domain so as to have a Better Outing in corporate?

Atul: To succeed in any organization it is extremely important to be truthful to yourself. While in armed forces we do become Jack of All trades and are made to perform all kinds of jobs from operational to administrative to financial to event management. However in heart of our hearts we do know the domain in which we are good and can excel. It is thus most important to identify that Core Competency in yourself and work towards improving your theoretical and practical knowledge as well as network in that domain. This will assist you in your career progression within armed forces as also facilitate transition to a best fit role in most suitable industry vertical / horizontal when moving to corporate world.

To quote my example I got trained in SAP and related IT subjects during the military service as it was required to improve my skills set related to the job I was expected to perform. I was in-charge of a lighthouse IT transformation SAP project for the Army and had to match wits and knowledge with the best brains from IT industry as part of the job. I realized this was my USP and continued building up on it which enabled me to land a suitable role in corporate in the same domain.

Uday: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous journey after hanging the spurs. Can you share a few from your experience?

Atul: For the first few months after my PMR, all I did was meet friends and family and focus on my health. These months of introspection and self-care were fruitful in strategizing for next steps. So lesson learnt was that we do need some time to ourselves which somehow we miss out in our daily job and home tasks. We neglect ourselves in favour of official tasks and family issues which can be better managed if we take care of ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually.

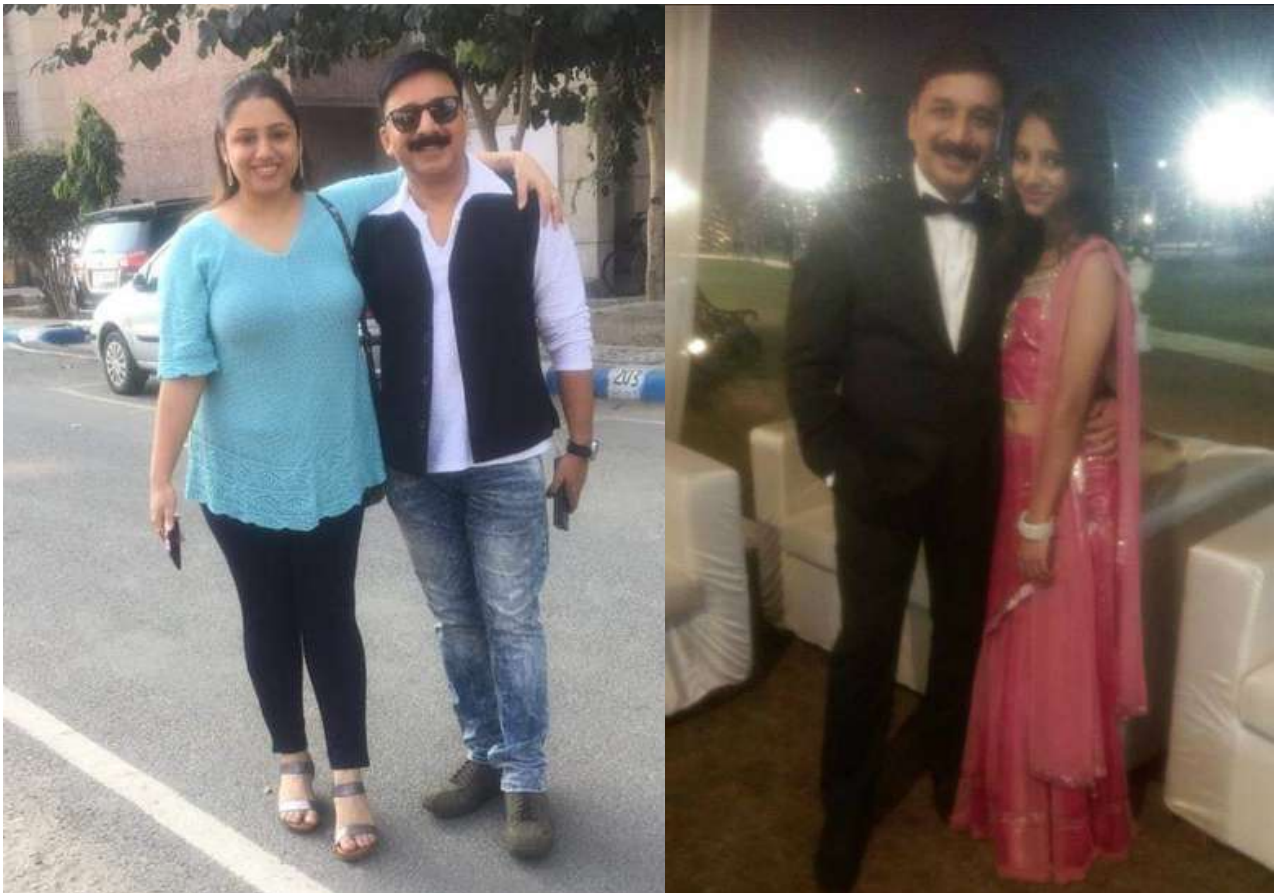
In my younger days we felt corporate life was all rosy and luxurious in metros while we toiled hard in field areas. As we grew in service and interacted more intimately through professional and personal connects, we realised grass is not all that green. Main factor found lucrative till very late in my military life was compensation packages in six or seven figures supposed to be given to almost everyone in corporate. This misnomer is also more or less gone now. In case anyone wants to leave armed forces due to perceived higher salary then they must consider CTG (Cost to Govt) equivalent of CTC they are likely to get in civil street. It is not too different and the earlier one realises, that not everyone is getting salary in crores the better it is.

Another one is that personnel transiting from military to management world must unlearn a few behavioural traits and acquire a few to fit in the new paradigm. Few things taken for granted in military life are to be earned in corporate. Like a separate cabin or a Personal Assistant / Executive Assistant. Unlike military where officers have a support staff including clerical help it is not so in corporate and one has to write

mails and get print outs oneself right up to the top. So take away is to keep the fundamental values intact like honesty, sincerity, loyalty and integrity and improve on values like Tolerance to Ambiguity and Ability to Plan without supervision.

Uday: What are your future plans and do you have any special Goals? And how are you preparing for achieving them?

Atul: I have just started in my 2nd innings so I would like to continue for as long as needed by my mind and my basic needs. I need to grow to my level of incompetency in corporate ladder for which I have a lot to learn and work hard, may be harder than my peers who are in the environment since long. I would like to be known as a professional worth looking up to for professional and personal advice in the industry irrespective of my title or pay package. I want to be the “Man to Go To” in my chosen field of work. I am positioning myself as leader for opportunities in Digital Supply Chain and Complex Program Management. Though my qualifications and experience is reasonable I am enrolling soon for PMP certification to keep abreast.



With My Daughters

Uday: The VUCA world is a huge learning experience for all of us. Could you please share how much the present world situation has impacted your professional world? And what is your insight and suggestions to our readers?

Atul: As a leader or Manager we take most of the decisions in our organizations to successfully keep operating. The increase in volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity means that we must keep it dynamic and be mentally agile to absorb the disruptions. We have to find our own ways and fresh approach to provide positive results in the constantly changing scenario.

Any organisation is primarily about the three P's. Product, Process and People. It's the people who matter most for any organisation to succeed. The focus has to be on people – to understand their behaviour and needs – to be more empathetic. This requires the right framework conditions under which each individual can contribute his or her skills and services. The willingness to engage in genuine cooperation and take on clear responsibilities is a basic prerequisite for innovation. In a VUCA world, the most important thing is to anticipate the future and to strengthen cooperation with modern solutions. Decisions and connections are success factors for shaping the common cause.

Uday: Do you have any other hobbies or interests, which you pursue passionately? And how?

Atul: I have always been into creative activities like sketching, poetry, music, movies, reading and writing. I also like to share my thoughts through speaking and writing on various subjects. So I am into writing blogs and articles which are published as also collaborate with organizations for guest lectures and participating in seminars / webinars.

Uday: We all have had great mentors and coaches in our Lives? Would you like to talk about them from your Journey in Fauj and in Corporate?

Atul: It is very difficult to actually name one or more who have influenced my thinking and behaviour in personal and professional life. I have learnt a lot from so many of my seniors, peers and subordinates in school, college and Army life, that it would be unfair to name any one. However I can definitely name my father Late Dr Brijendra Kumar whose influence has been the major part of shaping my thoughts during formative years though ironically I never saw or heard him having lost him when I was only 2 years old. His image and talks about him from my mother and others made me firm up to emulate his qualities.

Uday: Top Qualities that you feel are very important for excelling in the corporate world?

Atul: Military personnel can be a good fit in corporate. In corporate world the motivation behind work ethics is mostly economic while in military life it's got to do with **Naam, Namak aur Nishaan.**

However on transition to civil life they have to modify a few of these traits by unlearning and relearning some values. Those who are able to do so are successful in second innings while those who stick to pure military values suffer a bit. Hence Trust in Own Abilities, Mental Agility, Good networking, staying abreast on chosen domain and Keenness to unlearn old processes and relearn new ones are important qualities to be adopted to excel in the corporate world.

Uday: One question that you think every officer should ask himself/ herself while preparing for his/her career after Fauj?

Atul: Military personnel must understand that they are in the best organisation of the world and despite its shortcomings including steep hierarchical structure restricting career growth of far too many capable persons it is still the best place to work. However those thinking of transition must very clearly and thoughtfully analyse their reasons for such a change. If it is due to not getting promoted and apprehension of working under a junior then they must realise they will have to do same in corporate where a younger person is most likely to be your boss. If they want to leave due to destabilised life as a result of frequent postings then they must consider frequent travels/ relocations and change of companies in their second career having the same effect on families. In case they want to leave due to perceived higher salary then they must consider that not everyone is getting salary in crores in civil street.

They must take the plunge only if they are clear what do they want to do in second career and be equipped for that role / vertical / industry with qualifications, experience and connects. Ask yourself where you want to be after five years in corporate – in which industry vertical doing what role. According to identified core competency and having obtained suitable qualifications for that would pave the way for preparation of CV / Resume. Keep in mind that your medals, battle performance reports and course grading are not relevant in civil job. Most of the officers make the mistake of writing long and armed forces oriented experiences in the CV which is not desired. So Role fitment is the primary task one should do before PMR / Superannuation.

Uday: Your views on the role played by Family, Friends and Well-Wishers in the Transition and in future assignments?

Atul: I spoke earlier that the biggest challenge at the time of transition was overcoming my own fears and resistance to change. Having decided to go ahead I had to plan and time the transition with due thought to my family and probability of getting a suitable job. Family and friends can be a great pillar of support in positive motivation and advice. While the immediate family can support you with assurances of tiding over periods of uncertainty, extended family, friends and well-wishers can provide insights on civil world, helping in writing CV and establishing connects with veterans already in corporate world. While some ad-hoc system is in place for military personnel being helped by those in industry I believe other than Govt organizations there must be a few cohesive groups of veterans established to provide structured support to transiting military personnel initially and subsequently.

Uday: Tell us more about your family?

Atul: My wife Madhvi is a home maker and qualified nutritionist and teacher. My Elder Daughter - Anshika is post graduate in Literature from Delhi and Pune University. She worked as Chief Editor in corporate before quitting to follow her passion of baking. She is currently a home baker and also works as Owner Chef for a Bakery Restaurant with Radisson Blu at Greater Noida. She also runs a company for Content Writing. My younger Daughter - Alankrita is a graduate of Delhi University in Psychology. She runs her Mental Health organisation by name of Sulhaa as also collaborates with various agencies on the subject. She is an award winner writer of articles and chapters in books on psychology. Plans to continue her studies for a doctorate. She is also a trained accomplished Kathak dancer.



With Family



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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Guest Speak

IN INTERACTION WITH FORCENET TEAM

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a globally revered spiritual and humanitarian leader. He has spearheaded an unprecedented worldwide movement for a stress-free, violence-free society. Through a myriad of programs and teachings, a network of organizations including the Art of Living and the International Association for Human Values. He has also played vital roles in peace negotiations globally. The Organisation operates in 156 countries, The Art of Living is a non-profit, educational and humanitarian organization founded in 1981. They are guided by Gurudev's philosophy: "Unless we have a stress-free mind and a violence-free society, we cannot achieve world peace."



Team: Switching from a military career to a civilian career not only demands a reorientation in terms of skilling...What would you advise such people to handle such change?

Gurudev: Life is all about changes, and life poses such challenges in front of you where you need to explore your adaptability. On one hand, it's good that you are trained in discipline. The military has taught you that. And society wants people who are very disciplined and committed. Now what you need to adopt is patience and perseverance. These two things can come when you start meditating. Flexibility is also much needed when it comes to business and social interaction. If you can develop these things, then you can excel wherever you are. Also remember that not everybody is trained like you to be so disciplined. You have to leave certain room for others' imperfections and not expect perfection from everybody.



Addressing the European Union Parliament

Team: In the military all personnel are imbued with a sense of collective identity...How would you advise that people transition from the collective identity mindset, to an individual mindset?

Gurudev: I would like you to see it from a different angle. A collective identity is much needed in society for selfless service. And I tell you, though this individual identity may appear to be suppressed, it never goes away. It stays underneath and will automatically blossom when you take responsibility and do service in society. Although you are working in the military sector, when you come back home, you have your individual taste. And when you leave the service, then is the time to express your individuality without losing the big picture of serving people. Again, I would like to emphasize that meditation will be very helpful to tap into the intuitive aspect of your consciousness.

Team: While in the military, the mission and the purpose is very clearly spelled out in the chain of command...What do you suggest, how do you suggest people handle this?

Gurudev: In civilian dress you can have your own vision. You can start your own mission. And so many people have done that. There are many examples where ex-servicemen have walked into villages and taken the reins to transform the village. Many who have done excellent work. For example, even the Art of Living movement has been run by many ex-service people. They have been the chairman of the institution, and they've brought discipline at the same time. They have given examples of how you can work towards perfection.



*Air Cmdr R N Merani (Retd) Chairman of Rural Development Programme (SSRDP) Trust;
Vice Admiral Ramakant Pattanaik, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd) President of Government Programme;
Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC (Retd) Chairman of International Association of Human Values (IAHV) Trust.*

Team: Military teaches personnel to be self-effacing, understated and a little reticent...How would you advise how this should be handled?

Gurudev: Actually every setup, whether corporate or social, requires people with integrity. Today when you can't trust anybody, businesses are looking for people who are trustworthy and who deliver things on time. Look at the positive side of it. Now having said all this, I would say meditation will help you to be spontaneous and not undersell yourself. Service before self is not a bad thing, but at the same time, it need not hamper your ambition to grow in a sector. You can bring a balance of these two

traits. It is possible. First, believe it is possible. You are not like a rock. After all, you are human beings and you have tremendous flexibility; and flexibility with commitment is something that the world is looking for.

So I would say you need to have a little bit of orientation. Work in any non-governmental organization just for a few days or even a few months, and that will give you much needed flexibility. That is number one.

Second, you already have discipline. Continue doing meditation. Meditation can de-clog all the “should and should nots” in yourself, and it can make you a little more flexible. Social interactions will also become better if you listen to some knowledge, do some meditation and leave a little room for imperfection. This is very important. In society you can't expect everything to be perfect like in the military. Here you must allow some imperfection as well, and that will take care of you.



Team: An extremely large team of volunteers is committed to the mission of the Art of living foundation. Could you please tell us the secret behind such enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteers? And also how did you manage to get such a large volunteer force year after year across the globe?

Gurudev: It's the knowledge which speaks. It is the product that speaks. And we have managed to keep a fine balance between discipline and freedom.

Team: Art Of Living has a large number of veterans working in the organization. How have you found their work to be?

Gurudev: Very good, though I do agree that initially, they might have faced some difficulties in managing the chaos. In Art of Living we have a lot of chaos because many different types of people are always involved in everything. But that has given them a lot of training and personal growth.



*Commodore H G Harsha (Retd), Chairman of Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidya Mandir (SSRVM) Trust;
Commodore Sarvotham Rao, VSM (Retd) was the former Chairman of Vyakti Vikash Kendra India (VVKI) Trust.*

Team: Leap of Faith! We all hear it so often but how to really understand it and truly prepare to take the leap of faith?

Gurudev: You cannot impose faith from outside. Faith is a character of your own consciousness which blossoms from within you. And if you ask me when and how it will blossom, then i would say -

1. Your mind has to be clear, a confused mind cannot have faith. Mind should be clear.
2. You should have a broader perspective about life. It is very important because when you see your life from a bigger context then your faith simply wells up from within. Broader context is when you see there is a greater power on the planet, an unseen hand is with you. When you recognise and realise this, faith simply wells up in you.
3. You should look back at your own life. You have gone through some or other crisis in life and each time you had some crises you have overcome that. There has been an innate power inside of you which has helped you to sail through the rough patches in life. So your own experience and putting your attention to it can also increase faith in the current scenario of life.

Team: Many military officers may face some career disappointment in that they may have fallen off the career ladder in the steeply pyramidal structure of the armed forces despite being extremely talented and diligent. This does leave some scars on their psyche. Another contributory reason could also be undergoing stressful and traumatic experiences in the military. How do you think that people should handle the psychological aspects of the disappointment in order that it does not adversely impact their second career?

Gurudev: Often we are stuck in our past memories, past failures, we think about our failures more than about our success. This is the tendency of the mind. Now how to reverse this tendency, it is possible only & only through meditation. If someone is doing meditation and yoga daily & listening to the vedantic knowledge there is no way the mind gets stuck in the past or in the memory or you will even feel you are aged or getting old. The secret of ever youthfulness & the ability to move forward with positivity & without baggage of the past is vedantic wisdom or meditation. Sudarshan Kriya is an excellent way out of this problem that a person faces.

Editor: The Editorial Team is thankful to Capt. Uday, CA Namrata and Vishal all three from Defence family, for spearheading and organising the interview with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.



Capt. Uday, CA Namrata and Vishal With Gurudev

ART OF LIVING COURSES AND CONTACT DETAILS

All courses offered from Art Of Living can be found in <https://www.artofliving.org>. However for specific programmes for Govt Officers and Corporates, respective desks under VVKI Trust can be approached. Rohan Jain, National Secretary Govt Programme (Mob: 7768876363).

Online Meditation and Breath Workshop - Special live session with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar from 10th to 13th Feb 2022.

(4 Days: 6:30 - 8:30 AM & 6:30- 8:30 PM). ForceNet member Capt Uday Shriwas can be contacted on 9004668066 for any further information.

For officers who are looking for a job through Art of Living can contact Sandeep Mob: 7411723505 and email id - sandeep.dinesh@artoflivinghr.com

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

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. Prachi Chaturvedi Randhawa D/o of an Infantry Officer is an industry agnostic IT program manager with 15 yrs of experience working across APAC, Australia and NA. She is currently working as an Account Manager at Content Bloom and her role is a mix of account and program management tasks. Driven by a passion for AI and its impact on human lives, Prachi is excited to be working as the City Lead for Vancouver at Women in AI, a non profit to encourage more women to join AI. Beyond work, she likes to learn new things with her son, she loves travelling and camping, and is also a renowned hindi poet.



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

Prachi: I am Prachi Chaturvedi Randhawa, d/o Col Kaushal Chaturvedi and Mrs. Sarita Chaturvedi. Being raised by an infantry dad and a teacher mum, I was embedded with a strong value system, self respect, compassion and empathy like all BRATS. I am an MBA from Symbiosis University Pune, have been working in the tech industry for over 15 years now, and currently live in Vancouver, Canada with my husband Gaurav Jeet Randhawa, and my son Ranbir.

I am a poetess, a short story writer, a wildlife and travel lover, a woman in tech leadership and an Artificial Intelligence enthusiast. I was honoured to receive awards for my travel blogs, photography, and my poems by various esteemed Indian Government, private and international organizations.



With Family on my passion of wildlife

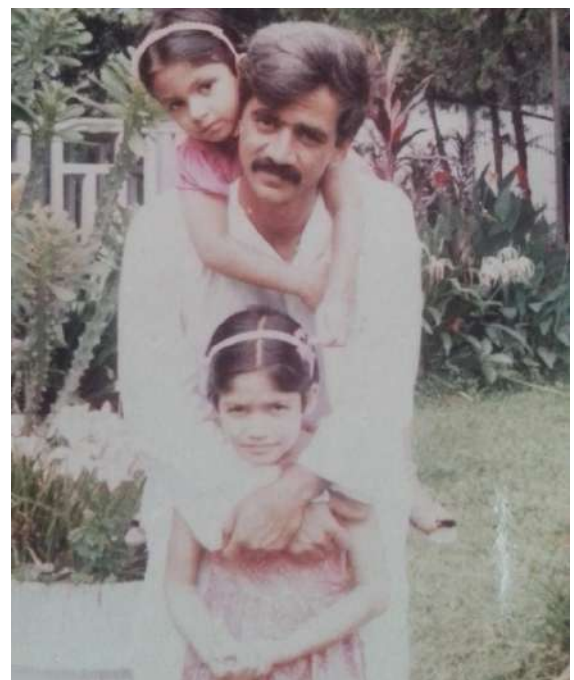
Uday: What is it that inspired you to embark on the journey in the world of technology, content creation and AI?

Prachi: I graduated in commerce in the early 2000s, this is the period when IT was booming in India and computers were already a part of our daily lives. My parents were very supportive and they let me take up some tech courses, post which I was certain that this is the field I'd like to pursue. I took up a new course at Symbiosis-MBA (Information Technology), given that we were just the second batch of this course, this was a risk- but a calculated one. I knew that all things IT will need Techno-Managers, people who can identify real world and business problems and work with tech teams to find solutions to these problems.

I started my career as an associate project manager, then moved to project management and spent the initial years travelling across Asia Pacific and Australia, working for some of the largest tech companies. Just like in the army we get to experience different cultures, my job helped me develop stronger cross-cultural sensitivity. This plays a major role in how you deal with customers. In the next few years, I grew to be a program manager and work for a variety of industries - medicine, BFSI, aviation, telecom, retail and more. Some of these were tech projects, and some were innovation programs. I got an opportunity to work with C-Suite Executives, universities like MIT, INSEAD and focus on future technologies. I worked with content and AI as part of my roles and absolutely loved how AI can bring in real world changes. Content is a major part of what we do- the websites, the knowledge articles, the courses, marketing material, client collaterals. AI is the future - in simple words it trains the machines to stronger human like logic and be able to perform tasks more efficiently. We experience AI in our lives now- banks, smart homes, auto driving cars and much more. This is an exciting space and an exciting time to be in this space. Its evolving, and I am still learning a lot of new things each day.

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

Prachi: My primary source of inspiration will always be my parents, for they have invested the values in me which help me navigate my life better. It is important to stay connected to your own core self, and know who you truly are to be able to identify the right sources of inspiration. I draw inspiration from a lot of different people and things- Steve Job's Stanford Speech "Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish", Seth Godin's communication style, Brahm Kumari Shivani's podcasts and videos on empathy and time management, many Ted Talk videos, my 10 yr. old son's enthusiasm and curiosity, and a million other sources.



With Dad and Pallavi Di

The key is to “reach out and ask”- when I come across anything or anyone inspiring, I reach out to them for an informational and just talk to them about what they do and how do they do it.

It is important to invest time and know more about the ‘impressions’ for them to become an ‘inspiration’ for you.



My Inspiration My parents

Uday: Army life had any influence in your choices as you travelled and grew in personal and professional life?

Prachi: As Steve Jobs said- *"you can only connect the dots looking backwards"*.

The exposure and upbringing army life gives you, instills gratitude, empathy, self respect, valour, discipline, persistence - values which help you emerge as a stronger version of you, every time you are put to test.

As I travelled to new countries and cultures, I have been able to break the ice and have conversation with college hires to C-Suite executives across companies. The hunger to learn and stay curious has helped me broaden the horizon and be able to converse about a wide variety of topics which helps build stronger relationships personally and professionally. All of this is only possible because of the Army life I was exposed to early on.

Put your country first, your men next, and yourself last – this mantra teaches you to value others, and it also teaches you to become a stronger person to be able to sustain all the pressure.

Uday: What are your biggest fears and challenges?

Prachi: My biggest fear is the fear of not being able to learn new things. In today's times there is an information overload, new applications and tools are getting to the market everyday. Technology is evolving, so is the way we live. For me it is very important to keep learning and keep growing – professionally and personally. This should be done in moderation and good consideration. I want to be able to run in the field with my son when he is 10, or becomes 18. I also want to be able to ideate and solve real world problems now or in the next 10 years. Finding this work-life balance, keeping sane and staying relevant, is the biggest challenge most of us face today.

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

Prachi: I will share two stories with you. The first one is about the spirit of adventure. In 2019, my husband, my son and me decided to go on a 6000Kms trip across USA, in our electric vehicle. This meant we had to plan down every charging station, stay on route and explore the amazing national parks and wildlife.

We planned this trip very well- specially the route, the food and the contingencies. Since this trip was done in the winters, we crossed places which had heavy snow (EVs performance goes bad in very cold places), places which did not have any charging stations- so we hooked up at RV spots for the night and car camped. Once our car battery was showing 0 and we just made it to a charging spot. Travel is a great teacher- not only it introduces you to new places, people and gives you a larger perspective of life, it also helps to handle risks and challenges better. In the end this became a very memorable trip for us because it let us learn so much more about the national parks, Navajo native American cultures, history of this country, and get a close look at the wildlife.

The second story is about experiencing pain. In 2020, when Covid had hit the world, and almost every family experienced it, ours did too. Both my parent in laws were hit by Covid and hospitalized. This was in March-April. My husband decided to fly down, and I was on the phone all night talking to the hospital, the doctors, managing logistics, travel etc. Right after my parents in law returned home the wave of “no supplies” hit India. No oxygen cylinders, no hospital beds, no meds. Having experienced the pain so up-close, I could not sit back and watch, so I decided to jump in, like many others, and we started a volunteer support group with many other poets based in India and abroad. We split responsibilities and worked round the clock to help people find the help they needed.

One of the cases I got was for an old lady in Ghaziabad whose oxygen was in the 70s and she needed immediate help. We tried very hard but couldn't find oxygen cylinders. Then an NGO in Gurgaon told me they will be getting the next batch on the next day at 4am, so I informed the family and they reached the Gurgaon center.

The supply did not come in and the lady's oxygen levels were already hitting the 60s. Fortunately, after a lot of hustles, we were able to get her a cylinder by that NGO. She could not make it and passed away the next day. The family went thru the ordeal of finding cremation grounds and all I did was stay connected with them throughout. Her son later came back and helped connect me with few more folks who needed help, and some suppliers' resources he had found. This experience taught me that no matter how prepared you are, it is not easy to handle pain, but what is important is that you learn from your experience and create a better world for the people to come.

स्वदेश

आगरा - मुख्य संस्करण

28 May 2021

कोराना काल में याद रखे जाएंगे कविगणों के योगदान

● कवि सम्मेलनों से दूर कोराना की लड़ाई के योद्धा बने कवि ● सोशल मीडिया के माध्यम से पहुंचा रहे हैं सहायता

मधुकर चतुर्वेदी

आगरा। विख्यात साहित्यकार नीरज जी ने कहा है कि आत्मा के सँदियों का शब्द रूप काव्य है, मानव होना भाग्य है, कवि होना सौभाग्य है। यही कवि आज कोराना की दूसरी लहर में संवाद के संवाहक बन महामारी के इस दौर में योद्धा बने हुए हैं।

विभिन्न प्रांतों के कवि सोशल मीडिया के माध्यम से कोराना संक्रमित मरीजों व उनके परिजनों को जरूरी जानकारी उपलब्ध कराने के साथ ही उन्हें अस्पताल, बेड, इंजेक्शन, रक्त व दवाओं की जानकारी देकर उनकी सहायता कर रहे हैं। वैसे भी कवि और



फेसबुक पर सहायता की अपील की। इस नहीं, अमेरिका की कवि अर्चना पांडा, कनाडा समस्याओं का निस्तारण कर इनकी सहायता

Appreciation for Covid Work

Uday: Poems and AI - they are quite contrasting, what would you like to say about them?

Prachi: I'd say they are both forms of observing the data around you and recommending improvements. The poet in me observes the social issues, absorbs the stories of our real heroes, and then present this in a way that can shape a stronger mindset of people. The AI enthusiast in me identifies the business problems, crunches the data, and works to find technical solutions to address those business problems.

Uday: What advice do you have, especially for family members from Fauj?

Prachi: Now this is a tough one 😊 Its like giving advise to people who inspire you. Hard to do, right?

The foundation of any strong country depends on 2 things- its people's willpower and the love for your nation. Even during our freedom struggle, when we didn't have money, or resources, and were facing atrocities- the only two things which helped us sail through were "willpower" and "patriotism". This makes us such a strong person. As family members of fauj, we are instilled with both these traits.

My humble request will be to become more vocal and spread the message- share your stories and experiences with the civilians so we are able to inspire the youth and help them find better role models and heroes, and shape a stronger future for India. If any of you reading this would like to make use of our platform Sriyani to share these stories, please feel free to reach out to me. Also, if any of you would like to know more about a career in Big Data or AI, please feel free to reach out to me.



Hindi Day celebrations at Vancouver, Canada

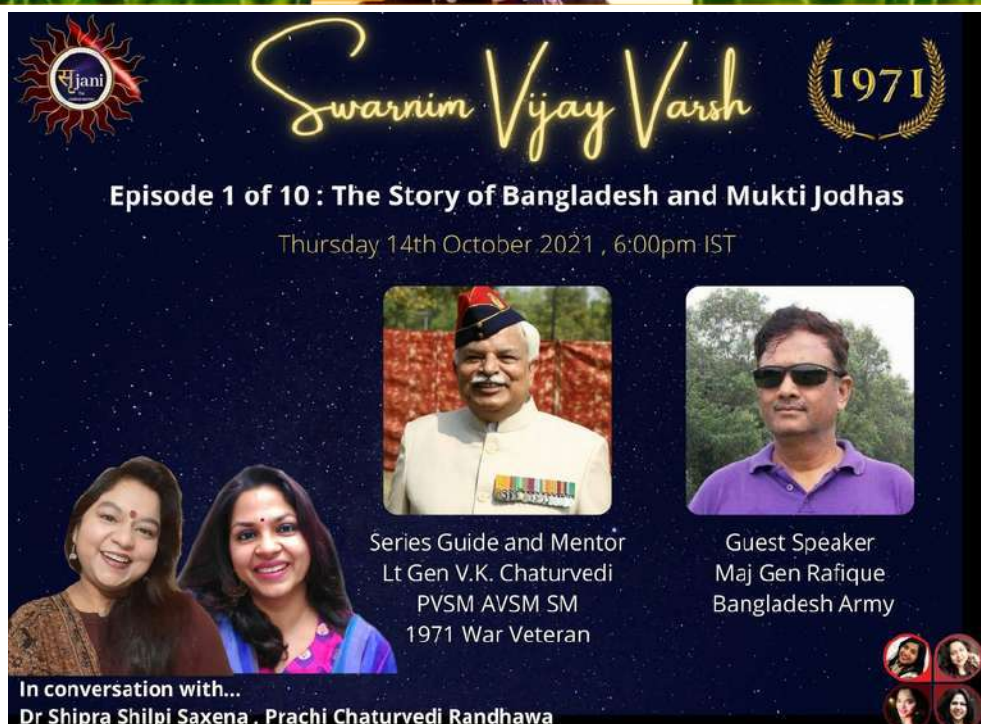
Uday: Tell us about the instance when you took the Leap of Faith?

Prachi: When you are single, decisions are easier as they only impact you. After over a decade of working in India, when my husband decided to get full time into analytics, he quit his job in India and pursued higher education in the US, that was a big leap of faith for me and for him. We had no idea what would happen after he finishes his course, will he find a job in the US or not. While he studied, I continued to work and raise a toddler back in India, living in Bangalore and away from family.

This was faith, but not blind faith, for it was backed by grit and driven by passion. Today we are both in better roles at work, raising our son in a diverse and inclusive space, and are more invested in India, its development and its heritage than we were while back in India.

Uday: Also please tell us about the Srijani - 71 War Win Swarnim Vijay Series you did?

Prachi: Between October 14th 2021 and Dec 16th 2021, Dr Shipra Shilpi and I, under the mentorship of Lt Gen V K Chaturvedi, conducted a 10-episode series to celebrate Swarnim Vijay Varsh. We talked about the atrocities in Bangladesh, the geopolitics, operational strategies of east and west front, battles and battleheroes of Indian Army, Navy and Airforce. In this journey we were joined by an amazing panel of speakers- Lt Gen V K Chaturvedi who mentored us and shared the stories of Sylhet, Maj Gen G D Bakshi, Brig Ajit Apte, Hardeep Singh Chandpuri ji, Mukesh Khetarpal ji, Gen Rafique of the Bangladesh Army, Adm Anup Singh and many more officers who had fought the 1971 war. The series was very well received by the audience - who got a deeper insight into the 1971 war. People loved it for it was constructed in a simple and easy to understand format.



Uday: You are conducting interviews, sharing platform with some of the most amazing personalities. Any interview, interaction which you would like to share?

Prachi: In January 2020, I along with three fellow Hindi poetesses- Dr Shipra Shilpi (Germany), Dr Sweta Sinha (USA) and Archana Panda (USA) co-found "Srijani- The Creative Women". None of us is a full-time poet- we all have work that we do- media, IT, environment science, but poetry and literature is our soul food. In the first year we were able to invite the best poets of India, like Padmashree Surendra Sharma ji, Padmashree Ashok Chakradhar Ji; Govt members like the then Union Education Minister of India Shri Ramesh Pokhariyal ji, Consul Generals of Vancouver, San Francisco and Chicago, various non profits like Sheroes and Voice of Slum. Most importantly, we got to invite the real-life heroes- our army, navy and air force officers like Gen Chaturvedi, Gen Bakshi, Maj D P Singh and many more inspiring officers for many different events throughout last year. I loved interviewing Shri Mukesh Khetarpal, brother of 2nd Lt Arun Khetarpal, PVC. It was so inspiring to speak to him, relive the journey of 2nd Lt Khetarpal, and see how his brother who still grieves the loss like it happened yesterday, has fuelled his pain to inspire so many Indians to put the country first. That interview will always stay close to my heart.



Interview session with Poets from India

Uday: What are your plans for the future?

Prachi: Upskills- learn new subjects, learn on the job, read more books, travel more, learn from more leaders, continue to write, and share what I have learned with others. I always want to be able to bring out the stories of our officers and men, for there are no greater heroes our nation can find. I hope I am able to continue writing many more poems about our faujis.

Uday: Most importantly, What is the best thing you love about Fauj?

Prachi: I love how the fauji families stay so close knit and always support one another. There is optimism, cheer, and love. I don't hear faujis brag about patriotism- because it is a part of them- day in and day out. I also love the power of the fauji network, two officers may never have met in person- but when they get introduced, they are immediately a family. I am blessed to be a part of the fauji family, with this family I am always home!

I want to thank Forces Network to provide me this opportunity to be able to connect with the amazing global fauji family you have built.

Special thanks to Capt. Rajesh Nair, Capt. Uday Shriwas and Col Iqbal for bringing this amazing Forces Network to life - "The Network that Works"!

Jai Hind, Jai Hind Ke Veer!



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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

ForceNetPreneur

In this series we plan to showcase a few entrepreneur members of Forces Network who have achieved a reasonable degree of success in their business ventures. The aim being to celebrate their success as also to learn from them with a view to motivating more amongst 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 UDAY K SHRIWAS

Maj Amitava Mitra was commissioned from OTA to the Corps of EME and did his attachment with 1/11 Gorkha Rifles. His army tenure was with lot of awards. Post his army tenure he did his MBA from Tel Aviv University (Israel) where he was awarded First Prize amongst 1500 students from 12 Institutions of Higher Education in The Marker-Dan David Case Competition, ISRAEL. Post his corporate tenure, he started his own venture called Swaraj Secutech, a TUV Sud audited ISO 9001:2015, ISO 45001:2018 manufacturing unit from India providing solutions for Hostile Vehicle Mitigation.



Uday: Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Armed Forces, and your subsequent Forces career. What are the Top 5 Learning from the armed forces Career?

Amitava: I was born to a family of Educationist in Calcutta. Father was a Chief Engineer in Merchant Navy and a professor of Marine Engineering. Mother was a school teacher and avidly managed both home and career. Fulfilling initial years were spent in the city of joy- Kolkata, but as soon as adolescence kicked in, parents packed me off to a boarding school in Dehradun. They believed an independent living would instill self-confidence and decision making and I must admit they were absolutely right. I was nurtured with a balanced growth. On one hand I dived into studies and on the other hand I took on co-curricular activities like Taekwondo and Himalayan trekking . It was a fulfilling experience and I ended it by topping India in Economics in my Xth standard. Schooling was followed with my engineering studies from Pune University. I did have a knack for Mechanical engineering but my competitive score allowed me to get a seat to Electronics Engineering . It was destiny. While I gathered the nuances of good analytical skills, life brought me to my life partner, Mona. Excitement was suddenly back in the air but I managed a control ignition and managed to secure a First Class in the course.

The year was 2002 . A fresh graduate and I saw the golden lines in Employment News

“Do you have it in you?”

I cleared my SSB in my first attempt and there I was standing as a commissioned officer in the year 2004. I was commissioned in the Corps of EME and to my delight I got a chance to serve with 1/11GR (Bravest of the brave) as my attachment tenure in north Kashmir. My unit and her traditions sharpened my soldiering skills & taught me

on ground man management. It pushed me to hold on and inspire in those icy nights out in the open . My unit made me realise the true meaning of the saying “**When going gets tough ..the tough gets going**”

After my two years in field I came back to my parent unit of EME where I got a chance to understand the basics of mechanical engineering and relate it to my electronics knowledge. Having been on the field I could better understand the pain of an operator and how to be a good workshop officer.

The top five learnings of my Armed forces career are as follows

1. Be truthful to yourself.
2. Learn and adapt so that you can stand and give an honest command
3. Empathise with the team you trust but make very good due diligence before you make that core team.
4. Innovate and think out of the box.
5. Lastly let's not be scared of failure but learn from the mistakes and then forge ahead anew.



With Brother just Commissioned

Uday: What was the impetus for you to leave the uniformed service? And How was your Corporate journey and the valuable experience gained in your career in the private sector?

Amitava: Like all of us, I loved my olive green. It's just that deep within I heard this urge to push myself more. What if I could combine my aptitude for engineering basics and my knack for public relations ? This question propelled me to prepare for my GMAT and with a good score I got accepted by Israel's leading Tel Aviv university into its flagship MBA program. I secured a full scholarship the program even helped me to bring my family with me to Israel.



During MBA at Israel

The course was amazing with participation from 26 countries. It concentrated not only in business but also had electives on Homeland Security. This gave me a stepping stone, a platform to connect and network with the outer world.

My first corporate job was to bring an Israeli company to India and in just three years' time we could establish a manufacturing unit for them in India.

I always fell back to the core training and the values that I got from the armed forces and this time too I validate validated it with the present challenges of the civil society. I had to adapt I had to be mouldable and I had to find my core team. I fell back on the team of NCO's whom I had known in the army and brought them in.

Uday: If I have to ask you about that moment when your heart said that it is time and I want to start my own venture, Please give us details about it ?

Amitava: It was in year 2014. The present company was in an auto mode and that we were already breaking even. But differences in perceptions between foreign management's expectations and Indian ground realities had started coming in .I had to stop and think whether it was a time to start again. I wanted a brainstorm and I decided to go back to Israel. My professor Simon who was instrumental in bringing me to Israel asked me to stay at his place in Jerusalem. It was in one of those evening walks that this moment arrived. Prof Simon suddenly stopped, looked at me and just asked " Amitava, I don't know about your products but I know you if you want to start something can I have the honour to be your investor?" This was the beginning of Swaraj Secutech and first warmth that it received was from thousands of miles away, from the by lanes of Jerusalem.

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

Amitava: Our line of business is in Hostile vehicle mitigation solutions. In India whoever wanted to guard an entrance from an intruding truck or vehicle, he had to import this solution from foreign shores. Swaraj Secutech's vision is "To make HVM solutions here in India, certify it internationally and bring forth a solution that is affordable and certified while having a dependable local after sales service"

This solution is for a very niche market but at the same time we understood that if we raise awareness then the potential is huge. So the first step was to expand our reach. We took part in maximum exhibitions across the country and explained to end customers and to the system integrators that we exist in India itself.

In three years time once that was done we started targeting markets in GCC and Kenya which has predominantly been a fortress for the Americans and the Europeans. We piggybacked on our European certification and Indian pricing and started targeting these markets too.

Uday: What were the challenges faced in this entrepreneurial journey? And, how did you overcome those challenges?

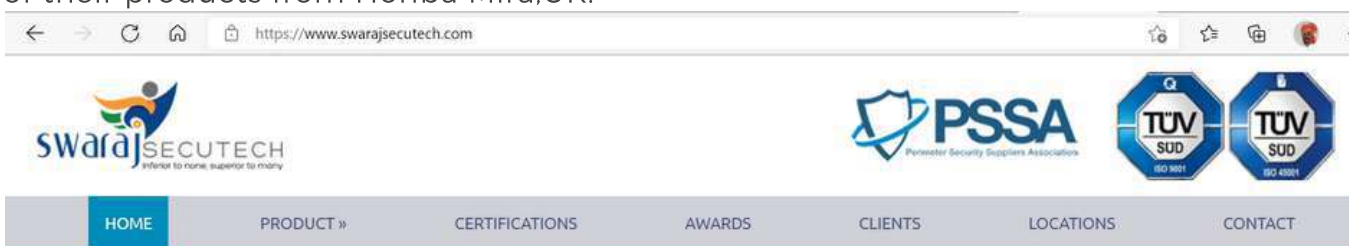
Amitava: The opportunity in Indian market is huge but then the sheer scale of the market was the biggest fortress we had to climb. We faced many challenges.

- The first was how to create a demand in the market. We understood awareness to be the key. We started taking part in exhibitions and we started moving for each and every opportunity all across the country to an extent that we saw 04 cities in one day !
- Once we started seeing the demand the next challenge was how to keep quality in check and how to create a trusted supply chain. Fell back to the core values of the Army and started doing due diligence to find out the core team of suppliers who trusted Swaraj’s vision and we could trust their handshake . We fell back on time and tested ISO certifications which gave us the important blueprint of processes and quality checks . We started adapting and we survived.
- But the most importantly challenge was how to have the finance to make your products and how to manage your cash flow. I remembered my professor Simon’s advice : Happiness = Positive cash flow. I started scouting for additional liquidity. Reached out to banks explained our vision and doors were opened . We got funding under central government’s scheme of collateral free credit line.

Uday: Would you like to share the details of your business , services offered and your strategy behind growing your company forward ?

Amitava: Swaraj Secutech is based in Ahmedabad with service nodes in Jammu, New Delhi, Mumbai Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai Kolkata, Tata Nagar, Guwahati, Haridwar and Dehradun. We have also opened a subsidiary in UAE and Canada. We're a small team of 120 individuals who believe in themselves and in the vision with which Swaraj Secutech was formed. One for all, all for one is what drives us as we forge the bond of a family with almost zero attrition.

In our industry the biggest credibility is passing a real life crash test. The nearest place a crash test that actually propels a real vehicle onto your product is conducted is in United Kingdom. It took us a lot of courage, R&D and funds to get our one product certified. As on today we are the only company in South East Asia that has certified 11 of their products from Horiba Mira,UK.



We offer to our industry a Crash Rated Automatic and Fixed Bollards. Where you cannot dig for a bollard we have a solution for Crash Rated Barrier. However when our customer want an intermittent second line of defense we have a crash tested tyre killer solutions. In case the threat is minimal we offer boom barriers for normal traffic control and tripods and flap barriers for pedestrian checkpoints.

The strategy for growing our company is to first reconsolidate our basics every time and to check for any cracks in midst of the prevalent Covid pandemic. Once we are intact in our foundation we are try to grow by hedging in 2 or 3 economies. The first one being India and the second one being the GCC countries.

Uday: What is your team like, and how did you build it?

Amitava: Our team is our family. The first echelon of the team are the core team members starting with my wife Mona who have always believed in me and shared the same vision of Swaraj. I also have my colleagues from the army who had worked along with me while in service and now stand shoulder to shoulder as officers of this dream.

One important factor while building the team was building was to build them from scratch. Young engineers who were looking for a chance were taken and groomed under swaraj's training programs. Step by step they were taught the business tools and according to their aptitude they were allotted the portfolio in the organisation. But one thing was always constant we always took men with a reference and we never poached a resource from a competitor. In swaraj there is no employees we all are team members.



The Team In All Khadi Dress for Event

Uday: Where do you operate from, what is your reach, and how do you tackle the challenges usually associated with this business, especially in today's competitive world?

Amitava: I operate from our Head Office which is collocated with our factory 32 kilometres from Ahmedabad. With small team concepts in mind, we have been able to address all the corners of India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Singapore.

The mantra to stay relevant in our industry is to keep innovating and to keep testing. We have been successful till date to make the shallowest fixed bollard in the world and that today we have a patent pending mechanism in the form moveable vehicular barrier that does not require any installation and can still stop a truck. It is ideal for our forces to avert another Pulwama type incident.

Uday: How do you plan to tackle the challenges thrown at you in this COVID-19 situation?

Amitava: The challenges have been multiple. However I have gone back to the basics of briefing the troops ensuring compliance to masks , sanitisation, vaccination and then sharing the knowledge of the present condition across the world to them . I believe this ensures that the merits of the orders are understood and willingly complied with rather than being forced.

Till today with God's grace we have not had a single case of Covid transmission between one team member to another in the factory and in our respective work places!

Uday: How have you found your entrepreneurial journey so far? Could you please share the Moments of Happiness and those moments when it was really demanding and you dug deep and faced the situation?

Amitava: My entrepreneurial journey till date has been very fulfilling. We have reached from 0 to 21 crores in just seven years. Yes we are still a very small Msme but definitely we are a very happy one!

One of the biggest companies in India had the biggest requirement of bollards which was almost 200 numbers in one single project. We had the certifications but nobody knew us yet. I remember the night when in the boardroom one of the procurement officer asked me *"Major how will you do these numbers because in the last three years all you've done totals to less than 200"* I remembered my training and I looked up and smiled and said to him *"Sir, have you seen a cricket match and the players moving their limbs the moment they come on field?"* He looked bewildered with this strange answer and then I said *"Sir, Swaraj just like the players are just warming up, the game has just started ...Please don't worry we will execute this project on your timelines"* With Almighty's blessing and tremendous hard work we not only executed that prestigious project but today 1/3 of our revenue comes from this organization's orders and that we are a single point vendor.

Uday: Any important projects undertaken by you over these years? And what are your future plans going forward?

Amitava: Some of the most important projects that we undertook were to secure some of our most vulnerable Armed forces bases from an intruding vehicular attack . There was no joy greater than giving back to my organization . Securing Bombay Stock Exchange, Shree Siddhivinayak Mandir and the Airports of New Delhi and Bangalore are also very memorable journeys.

Uday: There must have been great lessons during this tremendous entrepreneurial journey. Can you share a few from your experience?

Amitava: The biggest lesson in this wonderful journey has been to learn how to join the dots . How to stop while you run and still be attentive to each and every flower and their petals and then bring it into a Garland is the biggest lesson that I have learnt in this journey.

Uday: Also please share some information about your visits and interactions as you travelled to countries abroad to pick up the finer aspects and gain right skills? Any Coach, mentor you would like to talk about?

Amitava: There has been many wonderful people and mentors in my life. I would like to mention Professor Simon Benninga, who trusted his gut feeling so much that even though he himself suffered from a life threatening disease he's still stood up to his commitment of supporting me at the time of my need. I would also like to mention Col Jaideep Sengupta, Vrc from the special forces. Sir has been my mentor and till date without any expectations he has guided me and reminded me of the basics." Naam, Namak & Nishan"



With Simon - My Mentor and Guide

Uday: So, what advice would you like to give to the fellow ForceNet members who want to take up entrepreneurship?

Amitava: To all my sir's, colleagues and friends of Force Net, I would like to submit that if you have a dream please enact it..for now is the time to rise up and try.

Uday: Do you have any other hobbies or interests, which you pursue passionately? And how?

Amitava: I am a vivid reader of newspapers across the world. I am also a believer of our ancient science of yoga and I practice it to keep myself abreast with my inner atma.

Uday: Tell us about your family?

Amitava: My Wife Mrs. Mona Mitra is my engineering coursemate and handles the Operations of Swaraj Secutech as the COO. Her area of work is India and North America. My daughter Krisha is 15 years old and Son Pravir is 11 years old.



With Family



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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

Stars On The Horizon

Children of Defence Officers have the capability to excel in various fields, owing to their extensive exposure resulting from frequent transfers and change of stations. They possess very high adaptability skills, and immense potential as individuals. In this series we plan to showcase the achievements of such children of the members of Forces Network who are on the path to carve 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. Eesha Kapoor is D/o AVM Nagesh Kapoor, AVSM, VM, a software engineer by qualification, she is working as a Change Makers in Education (CMIE) fellow with the Delhi Government. She completed her Master's in Development Studies from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. She has a diverse work experience, as a software consultant with Oracle Financial Services Software, as a project lead at tech-media start-up Fossbytes Media Pvt Ltd, as a project manager / Media head at Centre for Science of Student Learning (CSSL), which is a non-profit start-up. At CSSL she worked on a research study on Social and Emotional Learning. She co-founded an education hub called the IDS Education Hub.



Uday: Please tell us about your childhood and the life you spent in an Army environment. What's the best thing that Army life teaches you?

Eesha: Fauji is a lifestyle not just for the Officers themselves, but for their families as well. For the first few years of my life, I thought this is how life is for everyone. Everyone's family has a parent working in the forces - Air Force, particularly and that they have to relocate every few years to the different bases. Only when I was old enough to make sense of the world, did I realised that I was one of the few lucky ones to experience this lifestyle. Yes, I do consider myself very lucky to be born to an Air Force officer. The young child in me who use to always introduce myself proudly as a fighter pilot's daughter, every time I entered a new school, is still alive somewhere in me.

Till date, my introduction always includes the fact that I have studied in eight different schools, including one in Pakistan. This also forms a great ice-breaker for all new settings. Just like any other fauji kid, I moved around throughout my schooling, sometimes even once every year. I was born in Jalandhar, which is my mother's hometown, while my father was conveniently posted to Adampur, which is a small village 20 Kms north-east of Jalandhar. This is how it was for most of my life, we always lived approximately 20 Kms away from the nearest town/city. Through my father's career, we returned to Adampur thrice, so it automatically forms a huge chunk of my childhood. Again, it was conveniently placed just an hour away from my nani and cousins, so we never complained.

I started my schooling at Air Force Academy, Dundigal, which is a small village near Hyderabad. I do remember one thing from this posting and that was that I made my first friend here. I am unfortunately not in touch with her, but she will always have a special place in my life. We next moved to the East, Chabua, in Assam. I began formal schooling here. I started Bharatnatyam classes in Chabua, when I was just three. My parents were of the belief that we needed to start learning such skills at a very young age, and I couldn't be more happy that they did so. Another very important, rather the most important memory from our time in Chabua is the birth of my brother. I distinctly remember that my parents asked me whether I wanted a brother or sister, to which I replied a brother. I was very convinced for the next few years that it was just because I wished for a brother that I got one.

We next moved back to Adampur, where I studied the next three years of my life. This phase saw me try many things for the first time - cycling, sleeping in my own bed, saving and spending pocket money etc. I learnt about different festivals, the importance of friendship and that no matter what, my family would always be there for me. I participated in fancy dress competitions, dance and dramatics and here is where I started collecting certificates. For every competition that I won in, I would get a certificate from school and that was a validation that struck me real hard. My parents recognised my fascination with certificates and used that as a way to encourage me to try my hand at as many extra-curricular activities as I could. They would get all my certificates framed and started putting them on a selected wall in the house. This was where the seed of "Jack of all, Master of none" was sown in me. Till date, there is always a wall in the house, that displays our certificates - from three-legged races to learning German.



Some of the chosen framed certificates displayed at Home

We then shifted to one of the most beautiful places that I've lived in, Wellington, Ooty. This tenure was filled with family trips and weekend getaways. We, as a family, love hill stations and so we cherished every moment of this posting. We then returned to what had now become our base, Adampur. I started seriously thinking about my future adult life and what I wanted to achieve in life for the first time when I was in 6th standard.

Our next posting was to a small place called 'Bakshi ka Talab', which is, approximately 20Kms away from the city of Lucknow. While we were in BKT, I got to explore the charms of a city life - mostly fast food and multiplex theatres and was introduced to the vastness of the World Wide Web. One major incident that left a mark in my life, while I was in BKT, was the death of a friend. I experience the phenomenon of losing someone close for the very first time and I believe that was one of the major stepping stones into early adulthood for me.

Next came few of the best years of my life. We went back to Wellington, this time for a slightly longer period. I studied in Army School and for the first time interacted and became friends with fauji kids from another Force. I call this phase the best time of my life, because I formed some lifelong friendships here. Teenage years could get very tough if you don't have good support in terms of family and friends, and what I had during these years at Wellington was nothing short of perfection.

We later moved to Bhuj, Gujarat, for a short period and then moved to one of the most challenging postings, for the whole family. It would be an understatement if I said our tenure in Islamabad, Pakistan was interesting. Looking back to those couple of years, I truly believe that we all learnt a lot during our time there. Resilience, patience, optimism, it took every good virtue to ensure that the tenure was a successful one.

My fauji childhood taught me how to be adaptable, how to live in conditions that are far from favourable and yet enjoy it. It exposed me to people from various different backgrounds and made me the person I am today, who can get into hour long conversations with anyone from anywhere. It taught me the importance of a community, of a safe and protected, yet enriching environment. I have learnt to take up every challenge thrown at me with confidence and positive spirit. Life experiences during the formative years lay a foundation and shape up the rest of the life, and I can't be more thankful to my parents and the armed forces fraternity for providing me with one of the best experiences a child could ask for.



Fauji Kids during a pre 10th Crash course 2008

Uday: What has been your childhood dream and any specific moments from your early childhood which left an imprint?

Eesha: Since most of my childhood was spent living in Air Force Stations situated in villages, the community feeling was extremely strong. We did not have the luxury of cities and were supposed to live with the limited resources – both material and human. The other families in the station, in the squadron, became our extended family. The idea of everyone living harmoniously together, through thick and thin, made me very passionate towards a peaceful and just society.

During my middle school years, there was a time when my father's whole squadron was relocated for a temporary deputation. We were used to our father leaving for TDs, short and long, but this time it was different because his whole squadron was gone. Coincidentally, the schools were also shut for vacation. This is when the partners of the officers came together and decided to stick it through with each other through the tough time. They would meet every day along with the children. Some days there would be potluck meals, some other days picnics. The children, of all age groups, would come together to play and give each other company. We would even help each other with our holiday homework.

However, it soon became clear to me, that even within the armed forces, there is a clear class differentiation. Officers, airmen, NCs, they all fell under different categories, where overlap in personal and professional lives was almost negligible. Furthermore, the experience of living in remote rural setups and around people who came from poor socio-economic and underprivileged backgrounds exposed me to the harsh reality of inequalities in the world early on. So even though I experienced strong community relations amongst families coming from drastically different backgrounds in terms of their religion and culture, I was also constantly made aware of the inequalities that exist in our society. This is what eventually made me turn to the profession that I am currently in, the social development sector.



My parents 25th Anniversary celebration

Uday: As you started your college life what's been your approach - preparation and research to get closer to your dreams?

Eesha: Although I now realise that I had always been inclined towards social sciences and social development, I was the typical product of the Indian education system, that existed before the current reforms. I was good at academics and was therefore encouraged to take up science and work towards gaining a professional degree such as engineering. I ended up to study Computer Science and Engineering at National Institute of Technology Hamirpur, while completely neglecting what I actually wanted to do in life. I even worked as a software developer at Oracle Financial Services for more than 2 years after my bachelor's. But in those 6 years - of completing my bachelor's and then working at Oracle - I would time and again find myself questioning my decisions and actions. Finally after a lot of internal struggle, I decided to quit my job and change my career trajectory towards social development.

It is very difficult to figure out what one wants to do in life, specially when you've had such varied experience in your life. Nowadays, it is all the more difficult in terms of choices for colleges and degrees since people are now spoilt for choice. However, my only advice in that scenario is to listen to the voice in your head. And be patient with yourself. We are often so scared to take wrong decisions, that we end up getting influenced by others around us, rather than listening to ourselves.

After I decided to finally pursue my dream, I came back home and started researching. I researched for jobs, as well as qualifications in terms of higher education. I realised that I came with a technical background and work experience and would have to take some time in transitioning into the social development sector. I did not hesitate in exploring any options, fellowships, internships, voluntary experiences, while also continuing my research. I spoke to as many people as I could from the industry, people who had made such transitions and people who had been working in the development sector for long. The most important thing that worked in my favour was my determination to make the switch. I got a lot of push back from people saying that it wasn't a wise decision to leave an MNC and a good paying job for something that I did not have any experience in, but all I knew was that I had to give myself a fair shot at what has always been my passion.

Uday: How did you prepare for your career in the college of your choosing ?

Eesha: When I left my IT job, I started looking for something that would help me increase my understanding of the development field as well as give me a taste of what it was to work in the sector. I found the perfect opportunity through the Policy in Action Fellowship by an organisation called the Young Leaders for Active Citizenship. Here, I also got the platform to interact with people from the development sector, especially those who had left other careers to work for the society in some capacity.

I knew that I wanted to study further and this time in the field of my original choice. But before that, I wanted to work and make myself prepared for the studies.

Alongside the 2-month long fellowship, I started volunteering with an NGO called the Robinhood Army, distributing food to those who were in need and I also picked up a job at a non-profit organisation in the field of education. All of these together, in addition to the supplementary reading and research, helped me form a coherent understanding of what post-graduation degree I wanted to pursue and what I wanted to achieve from it. I deduced that I wanted to study development studies and that I wanted to experience a year abroad. And so I started short listing universities that fit the criteria. After a long and thorough research, I decided to apply to six universities in the UK, including the Institute of Development Studies, which is ranked #1 for development studies in the world. The process of applying was in itself very overwhelming so I ensured that I kept talking to friends and family about it. I took help from people and got my essays reviewed. Found the perfect people to write recommendation letter. And so few months after applying, I had four unconditional and one conditional offer out of the six that I had applied to.

Uday: Would you like to talk about mentors and teachers who have guided you through your journey? And why do you think mentors or teachers are really important in our life?

Eesha: Studying in 8 different schools and then two universities exposed me to many teachers and I've been fortunate enough to come across some very inspiring teachers as well as mentors throughout my life. Whether it was Subha ma'am who guided me through a tough transition of shifting schools mid-way in 9th standard or Arvind sir who made me understand the importance of learning the language Sanskrit to improve our day to day life choices, I have had teachers who have motivated me to be my best self. Both academically as well as in my personal life. More recently, during my post-graduation studies, I realised how much of an impact the professors have in our lives, especially during higher studies. They have the capacity to influence major life choices and ideological stances. I am very thankful and grateful to teachers who let me embrace my thoughts and helped me become someone who could take my own decisions, instead of forcing decisions and thoughts on me.

I also found some amazing mentors during my professional life. My first boss, my team lead Amreshwar sir, I believe he has taught me all the major learnings about the professional life, that no one ideally teaches you in your life. He taught me how to be a good manager, of not just people in the team, but also of your own work. I learnt how imperative it was to be compassionate to be able to keep the team motivated to achieve goals. More often than not, we end up indulging way too much on the tasks in hand that we forget to focus on our larger goals, and I have always appreciated bosses and colleagues who created a safe space where I could align the goals of the team with my personal goals.

Uday: How was your experience there at your college /university? Would you like to provide us with more insights about your alma mater(s) as you look back to the colleges, universities you attended?

Eesha: My undergraduate experience, even though wasn't very fulfilling academically, since I did not enjoy the studies as much, nonetheless, it was very rewarding in shaping me as a person who I am today. Hamirpur is a small town in Himachal Pradesh, and coming out of an International School in Islamabad, it was quite a drastic change for me to enroll into a government engineering college. I lived in a hostel that was barely in live-able conditions and I had classmates with whom I had absolutely nothing in common with. We fauji kids have the quality of hunting each other down in the most random places, but unfortunately, I did not find anyone from a similar background in Hamirpur. What did happen was that I eventually started broadening my horizon of interacting and living with people from different backgrounds, this time I lived with people from poor social and economic backgrounds instead of just seeing them around me. I tapped into the adaptability that I learnt from my fauji upbringing and managed to create friends for life in my 4 years at this college. This experience made me value humility way more than before and I believe I became a more well-aware and sensitive human being.

My experience at Institute of Development Studies is fresh, so I definitely have more to share about it. We as a family, had taken quite a few foreign vacation trips, but I wanted to live in a foreign land, for an extended period, by myself. So when I got the admission to study the course of my choice, in the best institute of the world for it and in a country that I had not visited before, it is safe to say that I was ecstatic.



My Last day at IDS

The first thing that I was super excited for, was to meet and live with people from across the world. To have a peer group from whom I could learn about so many different cultures. I ended up becoming close friends with people from Taiwan, Japan, China, Iran, Mexico, Italy and of course UK. I learnt about similarities in the cultures of Mexican and Indian people, about how UK perceived their colonial past and about how Italy even though is one of the developed countries in the world it still observes a conservative culture. The best part was to try cuisines from all over the world. Being a foodie, I was in heaven, trying a new cuisine every few days.

But apart from the social life, I also finally learnt about the importance of studying what you're passionate about. There was such a stark difference in how I perceived academics during both degrees to the point that I did not think I was actually studying while in UK. It was more of a long vacation where I was doing something that I love on a daily basis. I was reading about all the relevant topics and was writing papers on topics that I deeply cared about. I finally understood the meaning of turning passion into work.

Another major observation that I made about my studies at IDS was how the University of Sussex as well as IDS took care of their students. I studied during the pandemic and so equal emphasis was given on physical and mental well being of the students. I couldn't believe how lightly I took mental health before my time at IDS.

I always spoke about holistic education whenever I had the topic of quality education came up and I am happy that I could experience studying at an Institute that shared a similar thought process and addressed various different aspects of a students learning experience when imparting education.



Trip to Seven Sister Cliffs, England, UK



A day Out at London with class convenors

Uday: What is your larger goal in life, and how are you preparing for it?

Eesha: Through my experience of working in a non-profit organisation in the education space and then my inclination towards education and development while pursuing my masters, I have come to realise that my true goal lies in working towards improving the education system in the country and then contributing to it at a global space as well.

I believe that my varied experience throughout my school life and then during my two degrees has a part to play in this. I have been able to experience and identify the problems in the existing education models and was able to research more on it last year during my masters. My passion for education came into life when I took the initiative to establish an educational hub at IDS to promote research in the field of education and development. I strongly believe that a well-rounded education system that imparts quality and holistic education can help elevate countries from their miseries. While the world constantly focuses on improving economic growth and raising lifestyle standards, it is of utmost importance to ensure that the world population is well educated in a way that people remain humble and compassionate while also being wise and innovative in their personal and professional lives.

I came back to India to work in the education space. I see huge scope of improvement at home. I chose to work with the Delhi Government as I learnt about their extensive approach at improving the education system. Apart from learning about the education reforms being brought up by the Delhi Government, I also got to experience their work, while writing my dissertation for my masters. I want to gain as much experience as I possibly can to understand how change is brought about through the government setup. I aim to increase my knowledge about the potential practices that could help Delhi and eventually India in reaching greater heights within the education system. The goal is to keep a balance in theoretical and practical learnings. So while I will continue doing my own research on education and development through various channels, I want to also keep one foot in the practical

world to learn about challenges in implementing the theoretical learnings. It is mostly an attempt to bring the best of academic and practical knowledge together for the most effective change to take place.



Meeting our House Convenor/Mentor in-person for the first time, summer of writing our dissertations! Brighton, UK

Uday: There is a huge potential, especially in fauji Kids. What would be your message for them?

Eesha: One thing that I always say is to cherish the vast experience that the fauji background brings to you. Learn from it and use it to achieve your goals in life. As I said earlier, very few people gets the kind of exposure that fauji kids do, so my advice would be to exploit the opportunities you get to the maximum possible capacity. Every new place, every new school, every new person has something new to teach and so always look forward to new experiences and new learnings because they do all add up at the end.

Uday: Would you like to share any experience, which touched your heart immensely as you were travelling different places during your student life and then in your present role with the Delhi Government?

Eesha: I can't think of any experience as such, but through my travels I have learnt that every person is unique in their own way and it is great to recognise that and cherish the newness that every experience brings with it. Having said that, I also believe that the feelings remain common in every human being. So it is a very surreal feeling when you meet someone who comes from across the world, who doesn't speak any of the languages that you do, but shares the same feelings towards something that you're both passionate about whether it be food or education.

I have only recently started working with the Delhi Government and my first project is towards building the Delhi Sports University. The Vice Chancellor of this university is Smt Karnam Malleswari. It is very inspiring to meet people like her, who battled it against all odds to become the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal. To see her so passionate about finding raw talent in children from remote villages and marginalised communities is very encouraging and keeps me motivated to work towards creating better and equal opportunities for all the children in our country.

Uday: Would you like to tell us about your achievements in your professional world ?

Eesha: I am currently in my forth job, and I think all of them taught me valuable lessons and skills. From working in an MNC to a start-up, then a non-profit organisation and now a state government. I have always enjoyed varied experiences in life and I am fortunate enough to be able to wear different hats in my professional career as well.

I have started from the bottom as a fresher and jumped up to be a team lead and a project manager in a span of five years. At Oracle I learnt how to engage with instructions and deliver on the demands and expectations of the clients as well as seniors. Whereas my start-up experience taught me leadership qualities as I lead a team of five. Working at a non-profit organisation taught me about the various challenges faced by such organisations in achieving their goals and now working with the government is helping me understand the role of power and importance of good policies and leadership.



Capt Uday K Shriwas was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank

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ADVERTORIAL - From Hum Fauji

The Hum Fauji Initiative Money Talk



Why let insurance agents short-change you?

Being part of the armed forces often means having to bear a higher degree of life-risk than others. This is also something that comes up in our financial planning discussions quite often with serving officers. While there are insurance provisions under the Army/Navy/Air Force Group Insurance Funds (AGIF / NGIS / AFGIS), it is but natural for all to think about having their own safety net too. Also, is the cover provided by these Govt agencies adequate in this hyper- inflation era? May not be so.

Typically, one will buy an 'insurance' from someone in their own hometown or community circles and then the word spreads fast in the peer group. Now everyone is thinking of getting the same 'policy'!

Someone from that peer group gets in touch with us to discuss the pros and cons. Here is how the conversation goes.

I'm getting Guaranteed returns!

This is something that all of them are hooked on to. A junior officer with limited personal responsibilities at his age, was considering paying Rs 30,000 per month (☹️) for this 'insurance policy' for a period of 10 years. That is quite some money given out every month!

The 'hook' was that the insurance company is guaranteeing that he will start getting a regular income from the policy from 15th year onwards till the end of 20th year and the total amount paid to him will

be around Rs 67 lakhs these years.

But what about insurance, we ask? Weren't we talking about insurance in the first place?

Yes, there is 'also' a life insurance of around Rs 37 lakh which is assured in case of mortality of the policyholder.

What do we say to it?

We listen to these promises of the agents often. And then tell them that they are not gaining much or what they actually deserve, in this entire scheme.

Prompt comes the reply that the invested money is getting doubled. Then we need to explain that even if it is getting doubled, it is happening over a period of 20 years, which turns out to be a return of about 4.32% per annum, and this doesn't even come remotely close to several other safe investments done for such a long period of time.

The interesting part is yet to come though.

Despite keeping that much money with the insurance company for such a long period of time, the actual life insurance amount is almost equal to your originally invested amount. And after the policy period is over? You are again left without this insurance at the age of 50 years.

Let's do some useful calculations

As the primary discussion was regarding insurance,

we then do some reverse calculation of how much should that officer be paying for that actual insurance of Rs 37 Lakhs in question.

Many of them are surprised when inform them that they can get the same insurance cover, that too till 60 years of age, for as little as Rs 4000-5000 a year. Yes, just above 1% of what they actually planned to invest in a year.

How? We will get to that in a bit.

Just one important point we need to highlight. That Rs 30,000 a month investment is a good commitment - just that it needs proper planning and appropriate execution. The one that was being explored was not the right one.

Coming back to insurance. How to get that cheap an insurance?

The simplest insurance product will do the trick!

This is the simplest and in fact, the purest form of life insurance. You pay some money as a premium and the insurance company, in return, assures that a fixed amount will be paid to your nominees in case of your untimely demise. Just that you pay the premium and forget about it, in other words you do not get the money back. There are some policies that offer a return of premium even in term insurance, but then the premium is not as low and again defeats the purpose of 'insurance'.

Taking more realistic aspirations and family goals, a Term Insurance policy assuring your nominees of Rs 2 crores in case of an eventuality, costs only around Rs 15,000 a year at the age of 30 years. The caveat here is that this is for a person buying this policy at a young age. But even at an increased age, premium of such policies remains very reasonable. Why? Because the agent commissions are very low and this is no fancy product.

The premium then remains constant throughout the policy term. If the same policy is bought by someone at, say, age 35, the premium could go up to just around Rs 25,000 a year. So, the key is getting this early on in your career.

In case of any eventuality, this money can be used by your nominees and loved ones for any purpose. Be it for repaying existing loans like a home loan or retirement of the spouse or higher education of children. It can be anything.

A challenge

Being part of the defence fraternity comes with its own set of challenges. One such challenge is that if you buy a Term

Plan when you are posted to a field area, it is likely that the

insurance company could deny you the policy or load some extra premium on it. This is due to the higher risk your life could face in those situations. So, the trick is to take it when you are in a peace area – this is all within rules.

Discuss with your financial planner about all the factors you should take into account to arrive at an ideal term insurance amount and tenure for you.

We hope this post acts as food for thought to make you think in the right direction, and prevent you from going for 'too good to be true' promises.



Contact us.



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Tech Corner

INFORMATION SECURITY : A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

I passed my Certified Information Security Systems' Practitioner (CISSP) exam, which is known as the gold standard in information security, on 07 Dec 21 after preparing and studying for nearly a year. It was a joyous occasion for me and brought me redemption, in that it restored a sense of pride and accomplishment. I owe much of my initial guidance to the ForcesNet group, as it helped me open my eyes to new avenues, and so it only makes sense to 'pay it back'. I have been handling IT and Information security related projects for a while, but got into a core Information Security job about 2 1/2 years ago. I cleared my ISO 27001 (Information Security Management System) Lead Auditor certification last year and that really set the stage for me to prepare for CISSP. The breadth and depth, and the impact of Infosec on our daily lives, was what drove me to prepare for and attempt the CISSP certification.

This write-up is meant as an experience sharing and a guide to fellow officers' who may have heard about Information Security, but don't know where to start. Having been in that position a few years ago, I thought it would be worthwhile to share my experience.

Disclaimer: This article is not meant to be a one-stop solution, but rather a guide to the first 'baby steps' one could take to enter the field of Information Security. Like life or like golf, learning and evolution in this field never ceases!

Why Information Security?

Why the recent outburst of news and interest in information security? Take a look around and you would see the impact of computing devices on our daily lives. From computers, to smartphones, smartwatches, IoT devices, we live in a mesh of technology and have become sources of data generation, which is harnessed by companies to provide us products and services. Search for a product on Amazon and voila! You are flooded with offers and variants of the same product / service, as one browses other websites. With immersive experiences such as Metaverse becoming mainstream, we could achieve immortality through our digital avatars. What is the price that we pay for these 'free services'? It is our personal information, our habits, our routines, which we share with a host of consumers on the internet, and protecting and safeguarding this data has become the focus of governments and organizations.

This information is also being sought actively by people with nefarious designs, to execute impersonation, frauds etc. Script kiddies, aka people with little experience in computers, are today able to harness openly available tools to execute exploits well beyond their capabilities. Take a look at a site called <https://haveibeenpwned.com>, feed in your e-mail ID and see the amount of information that may have been leaked about you in the open domain.

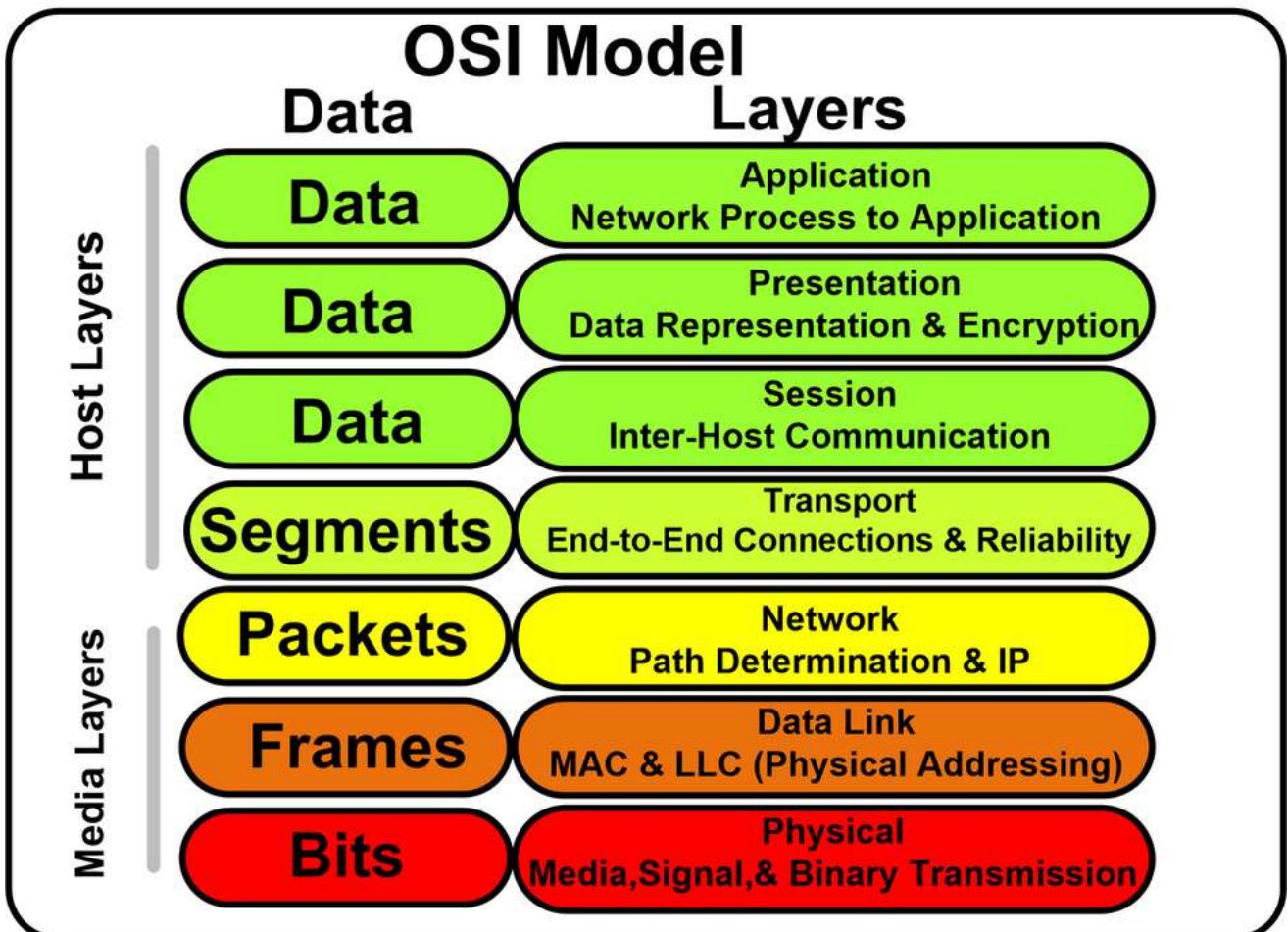
As per the Data Security Council of India Cyber-security Industry report, increase in digital footprint due to digitalization has led to demand of secure and compliance frameworks and infrastructure development. As the remote working trend pushes the world into a borderless network setup, the adoption of Cloud have become a key investment priority globally. This rapid digitalization has led to an increased regulatory attention from a data and privacy perspective, integration of new technology stacks to enterprise IT, and remote collaboration tools.



Source. Data Security Council of India Cyber-security Industry report

These trends, combined with the growing awareness at Board level around cyber threats, are pushing the worldwide cyber-security demand and spend. India is emerging as a major player in the cyber-security services and product industry, with combined revenue of USD 9.85 Bn in 2021 and a CAGR of ~40% in the last two years. This exponentially growing industry requires information security professionals with a certain credibility and experience to look for solutions, and produce reliable results and countermeasures to existing and emerging threats.

- **Networking Architecture.** Computers were built to ‘talk’ to each other. Decoding and gaining awareness of the inter-networking abilities is another key component of the field. The protocols and devices developed for communication are proof of human ingenuity and are the driving force for today’s information revolution. Having being in vogue over many decades, they are ubiquitous and are widely used. Yet, they were built with functionality, not security, in mind, and that is where many of the challenges emerge today.
- Add to that, the wide variety of computing devices in use today, and the mesh becomes even more intriguing. A good understanding of networking protocols is also essential to understand how information is to be secured, as it transits between various devices. A good start point would be to understand how the internet reaches your residence, a little probing would give an idea of the mammoth effort behind it!
- **The OSI Model:** The Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) model is a reference model that describes how information from a software application in one computer moves through a physical medium to the software application in another computer. The OSI model integrates the understanding from the last two sections and presents a block concept of how computing systems operate and interconnect with each other at various levels of interaction.

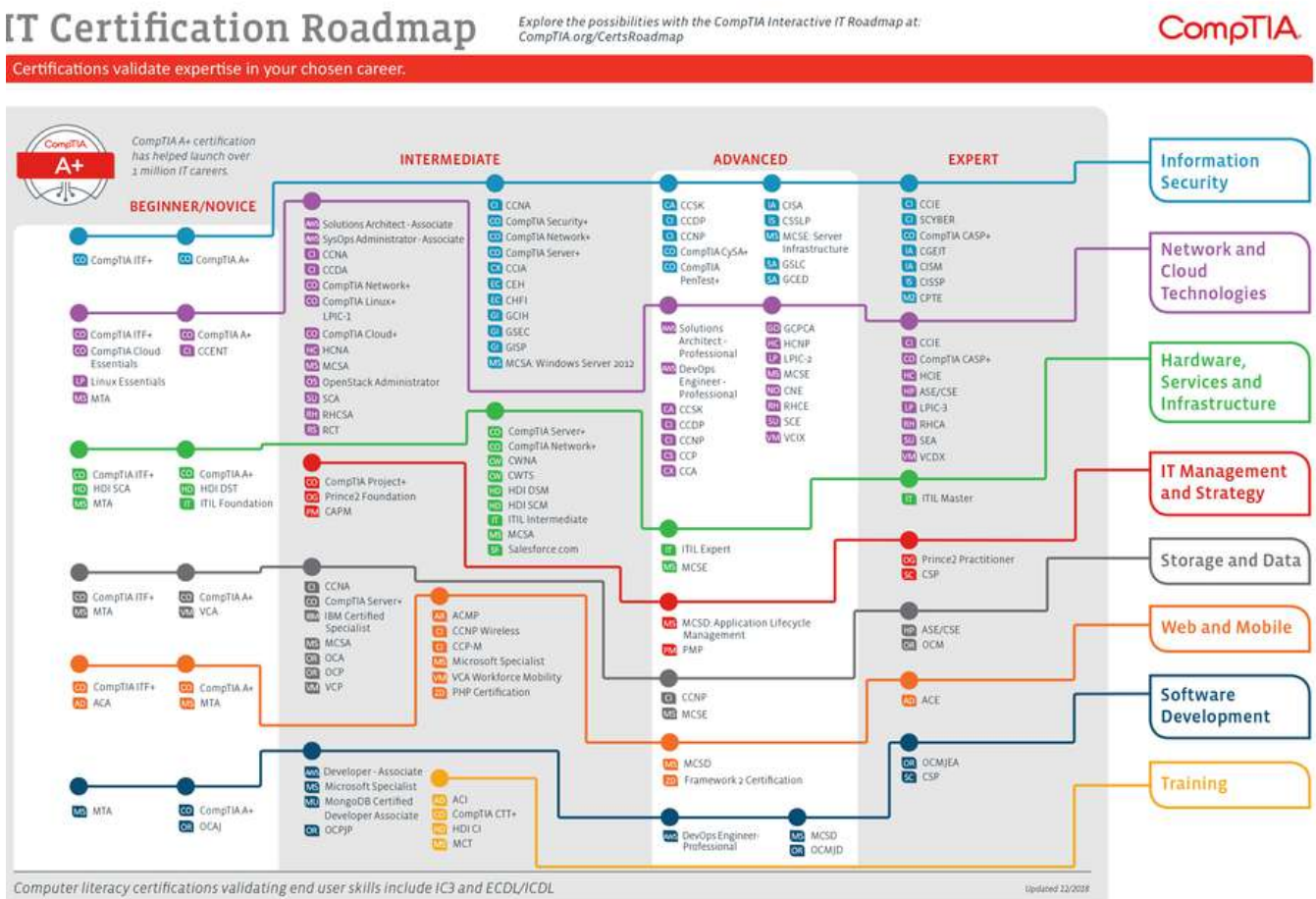


Source: Electrical Academia

These basic building blocks require time, patience and a lot of reading! There are numerous sources of rich contents available on the internet on these topics and one just has to Google up the topics to get started. Also, if the topics pique your interest, try to use simulators such as Cisco Packet Tracer labs, and sniffers such as Wireshark, which would give practical feel of the topics.

Training/ Certifications:

The infographic below covers the training and education aspects, which you may pursue once you have covered the awareness section. Drawing up training/certification goals, as you traverse the aforementioned topics, would help you plan and time your next steps, and help sustain the learning curve.



Source. Comptia

Also, speaking to personnel in the workplace, who are engaged in IT/ Infosec functions, is an essential for gaining practical insights, as you move up the learning pyramid. If you could, try to get a mentor, or a study partner, who can guide you through the initial days.

Conclusion:

The most difficult part of a journey is often taking the first step! I hope that this article would provide some direction to fellow officers and help them to steer a novel path. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day, so be patient as you move through the paces and try your hand at new skills. In conclusion, it is important for the Armed Forces community to break moulds and explore new dimensions, and such an opportunity is provided by the blossoming Information security industry.

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Amit Dalvi

Tech Corner

Artificial Intelligence: A Leap of Faith in Medical science

BY VIJAYKUMAR N

The dictionary meaning of faith is “Strong belief or Trust in Someone or Something”, which is essential part of human nature, behaviour, emotions etc. The focus of this article is on the later part of the definition of Faith- “Something” in which humans have off late started to place their trust on.

Humans right from Stone age to Industrial age have always invented, discovered, innovated stuffs like wheel, steam engines, power looms, IC engines etc, but none of these inventions were ever independent of human control nor were these designed to think and behave like human.

Things started changing in the era of digital revolution. Humans started inventing, innovating technologies that could self-sustain itself with very little or no human intervention. The advancement of technology in the digital space has grown leaps & bounds which is as simple as playing a computer game or receiving your email in your email box to as complex as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum computing etc. The digital technology has intruded in all aspects of modern human life from

- Digital watches which can sense your heartbeat, body temperature and other body parameters and provide accurate diagnosis on the condition of your heart,
- Internet of things (IOT) which can be placed on your ACs, Light Bulb and can be controlled over internet by the owner to switch on ACs, light bulb before entering the house,
- Connected car technology to give the health status of your car or certain control aspects of car on mobile phone,
- And the most complex among all the digital technologies being AI which has unbound usage in all aspects of human life from medicines, science, military to self-driving cars.

It can be rightly said that humans have taken a **“Leap of Faith”** and placed their trust on these digital technology, machines especially Artificial intelligence (AI) which is considered one of the most ground-breaking advancements in human history. World has already witnessed AI’s transformative capabilities which are powering some of the most cutting-edge solutions that we use in our daily lives. Today, AI empowers organizations, governments and communities to build a high-performing ecosystem to serve the human society and world.

Before we begin with what is AI let us see some benefits of AI, both simple and complex.

Seemingly Simple use of AI can be a spam filter in your email application, search engines auto completing your query, smart assistants like Alexa or Siri, You Tube suggesting videos based on your view pattern/ area of interest etc. (I have purposely highlighted the words Seemingly Simple- which is not so simple after-all when it comes to design-development-deployment-operation and maintenance of an AI it has a complex life cycle).

Other uses of AI can be in medical field for the betterment of human life, society: (Lot has been written and discussed on the military use of AI hence covering few of the medical benefits of AI)

Developing new medicines: The healthcare industry has been positively disrupted with applications of AI, including the discovery and development of new drugs. AI has been used to identify potentially beneficial molecules by recursive iteration and by leveraging data analytics, data mining on a large volume of data which otherwise is not humanly possible in the give time.

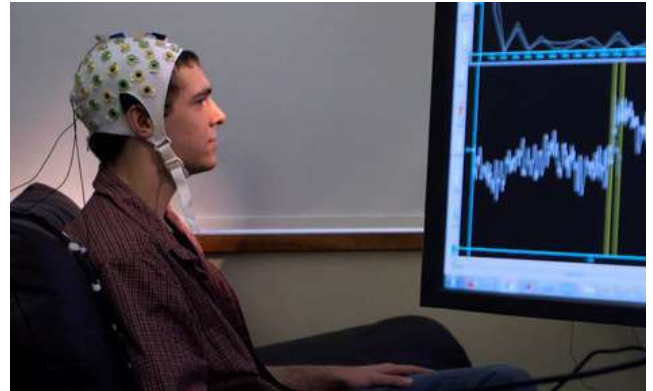


Helping people with disabilities: Artificial intelligence has also assisted people living independently with disabilities. Voice-assisted AI is one of the major breakthroughs, particularly for those who are visually impaired. It helps them communicate with others using smart devices and describe their surroundings. Tools like this can significantly help in overcoming daily obstacles for those with disabilities.



Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCI):

Neurological diseases and shock, accidents to the nervous system can take away abilities to speak, move, and interact meaningfully with people and their environments. Brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) backed by artificial intelligence could restore these fundamental experiences essential for normal human life.

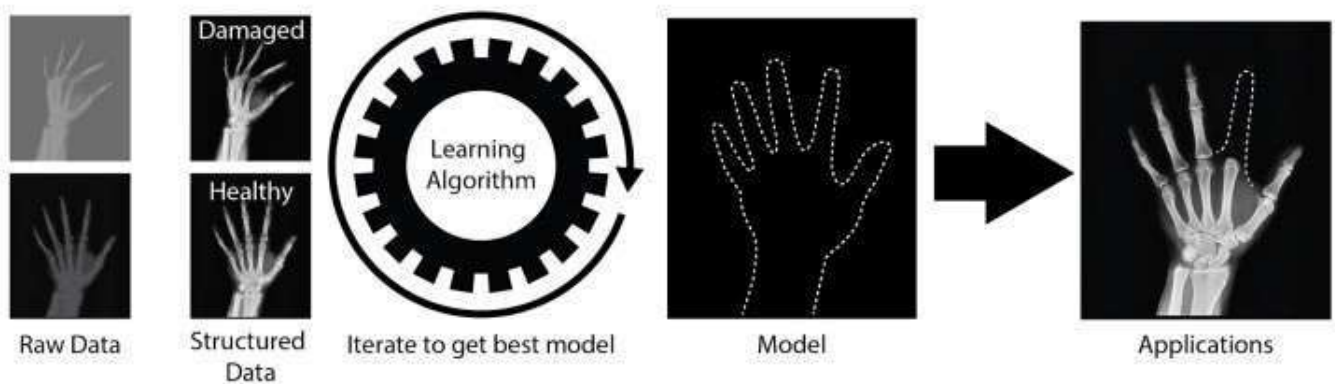


Next generation radiology tools: Many diagnostic processes still rely on physical tissue samples obtained through biopsies, which carry risks including the potential for infection. Artificial intelligence will enable the next generation of radiology tools that are accurate and detailed enough to replace the need for tissue samples in some cases, experts predict.



Making medical devices and machines more dependable and trustworthy: In the medical environment, smart devices are critical for monitoring patients in the ICU and elsewhere. Using artificial intelligence to enhance the ability to identify deterioration or sense the development of complications proactively in advance can significantly increase the survival rate of patients.

Smart Phones as diagnostic tool: The quality of cell phone cameras is increasing every year which can produce images that are viable for analysis by artificial intelligence algorithms. The tool identifies diseases by analysing images and matching the images to the data base of disorders to provide clinical decision support. This will help people in remote areas while reducing the time-to-diagnosis for certain complaints.



Artificial intelligence (AI):

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a wide-ranging branch of computer science concerned with building smart machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence.

AI in varying forms and degrees has been used in wide spectrum of fields, such as banking and financial markets, education, supply chains, manufacturing, retail and e-commerce, and healthcare. Within the technology industry, AI has been an important enabler for many new business innovations. These include web search (e.g., Google), content recommendations (e.g., Netflix), product recommendations (e.g., Amazon), targeted advertising (e.g., Facebook), and autonomous vehicles (e.g., Tesla).

The Four Types of Artificial Intelligence

1. Reactive Machines
2. Limited Memory
3. Theory of Mind
4. Self-awareness

1 Reactive Machines: A reactive machine follows the most basic of AI principles and, as its name implies, is capable of only using its intelligence to perceive and react to the world in front of it. A reactive machine cannot store a memory and as a result cannot rely on past experiences to inform decision making in real-time.

Perceiving the world directly means that reactive machines are designed to complete only a limited number of specialized duties. This type of AI will be more trustworthy and reliable – it will react the same way to the same stimuli every time. Example of a reactive machine is Deep Blue, which was designed by IBM in the 1990's as a chess-playing supercomputer and defeated international grandmaster Gary Kasparov in a game. Deep Blue was only capable of identifying the pieces on a chess board and knowing how each moves based on the rules of chess, acknowledging each piece's present position, and determining what the most logical move would be at that moment. The computer was not pursuing future potential moves by its opponent or trying to put its own pieces in better position. Every turn was viewed as its own reality, separate from any other movement that was made beforehand.

Though limited in scope and not easily altered, reactive machine artificial intelligence can attain a level of complexity, and offers reliability when created to fulfill repeatable tasks.

2 Limited Memory: Limited memory artificial intelligence has the ability to store previous data and predictions when gathering information and weighing potential decisions – essentially looking into the past for clues on what may come next. Limited memory artificial intelligence is more complex and presents greater possibilities than reactive machines. Limited memory AI is created when a team continuously trains a model in how to analyze and utilize new data or an AI environment is built so models can be automatically trained and renewed. When utilizing limited memory AI in machine learning, six steps must be followed: Training data must be created, the machine learning model must be created, the model must be able to make predictions, the model must be able to receive human or environmental feedback, that feedback must be stored as data, and these these steps must be reiterated as a cycle.

There are three major machine learning models that utilize limited memory artificial intelligence:

Reinforcement learning, which learns to make better predictions through repeated trial-and-error.

Long Short Term Memory (LSTM), which utilizes past data to help predict the next item in a sequence. LSTMs view more recent information as most important when making predictions and discounts data from further in the past, though still utilizing it to form conclusions

Evolutionary Generative Adversarial Networks (E-GAN), which evolves over time, growing to explore slightly modified paths based off of previous experiences with every new decision. This model is constantly in pursuit of a better path and utilizes simulations and statistics, or chance, to predict outcomes throughout its evolutionary mutation cycle.

3 Theory of Mind: Theory of Mind is just that – theoretical. The technological and scientific capabilities necessary to reach this next level of artificial intelligence.

The concept is based on the psychological premise of understanding that other living things have thoughts and emotions that affect the behaviour of one's self. In terms of AI machines, this would mean that AI could comprehend how humans, animals and other machines feel and make decisions through self-reflection and determination, and then will utilize that information to make decisions of their own. Essentially, machines would have to be able to grasp and process the concept of "mind," the fluctuations of emotions in decision making and a litany of other psychological concepts in real time, creating a two-way relationship between people and artificial intelligence.

4 Self-awareness: Once Theory of Mind can be established in artificial intelligence, sometime well into the future, the final step will be for AI to become self-aware. This kind of artificial intelligence possesses human-level consciousness and understands its own existence in the world, as well as the presence and emotional state of others. It would be able to understand what others may need based on not just what they communicate to them but how they communicate it.

Self-awareness in artificial intelligence relies both on human researchers understanding the premise of consciousness and then learning how to replicate that so it can be built into machines.

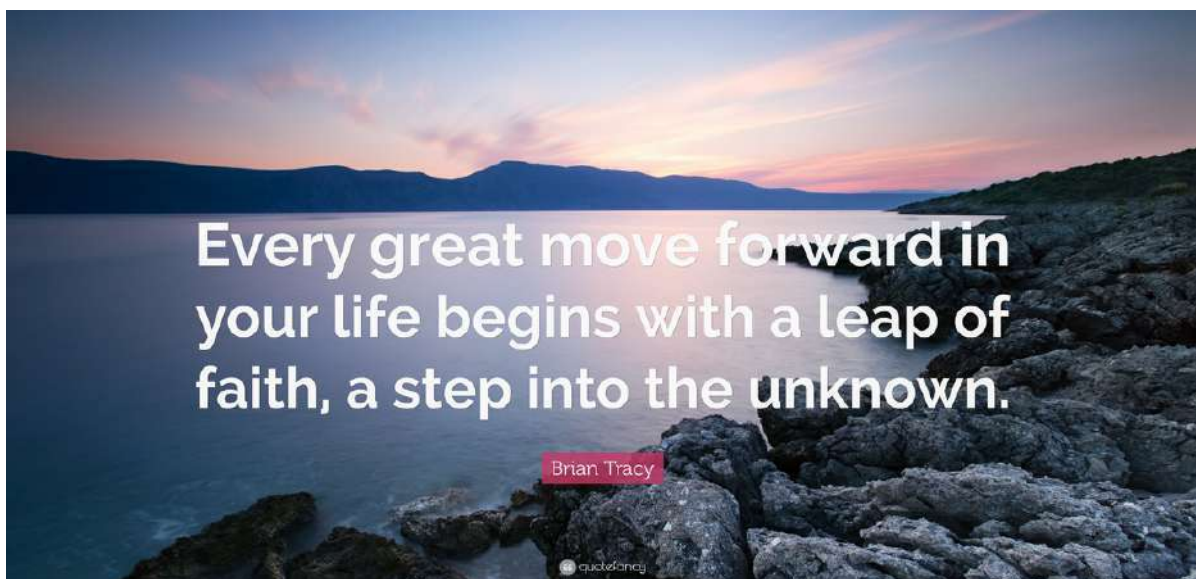
Conclusion:

With the rapid advancement in the digital technologies, AI and appropriate controls around it, the day is not far when the concepts of movies like I.ROBOT; Bicentennial Man will become reality and humans will Trust and depend on AI machines which will be definitely a “ Leap of Faith” by humans from trusting fellow human beings to trusting AI based machines which will mimic humans, human mind, human thinking.



Major Vijay Kumar N was commissioned in Corps of EME and did his attachment with Madras Regiment. He is a BE Computer Science graduate from Karnataka State University and has done his Executive management Program from XLRI. He has 13+ years of experience in the IT industry in areas like Information security, Auditing, GRC, Incident Management, Data Privacy & Data Security, Security operations. He holds Certifications like: CISSP, CCSP, CISA, CHFI, CEH, ISO:27001-LA, ISO:22301-LA and ISO 31000.

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Author of the Month

ARUN HARIHARAN

IN INTERACTION WITH RAJESH NAIR

Col Arun Hariharan a Corps of Engineers officer, took premature retirement in 2013. He is a senior corporate professional with a large telecom company and lives in Gurgaon. Arun is a voracious reader with a lot of interest in history, archaeology and occult. His weekly column on light hearted stories of his experiences in the military was published in Hindustan Times from 2011-2014 and he is currently a columnist with the Hindu Businessline. Arun is also a prolific blogger and maintains blogs for his short stories, travelogues and on his family heritage. He is also passionate about photography and dirtying his hands maintaining his motorbikes



Rajesh : Tell us something about your background prior to joining the Armed Forces, and your subsequent Forces career?

Arun: I am a second generation fauji and my dad is a senior veteran of the Int Corps who fought 3 wars and numerous counter insurgency ops. I joined the Bengal Sappers in June 1991 after NDA and IMA and was fortunate to not only do 6 tenures in my Regiment (53 ER) but also privileged to command the fine outfit in field- a dream for every young officer. A staff tenure after that as Colonel GS and I took a conscious decision to move onto a corporate career. Started my corporate journey with a great manufacturing company in 2013- Welspun, one of the world's largest home textile and line pipe manufacturers and then moved on to Bharti Airtel in a totally different industry, in 2018. Enjoying the ride as of now!

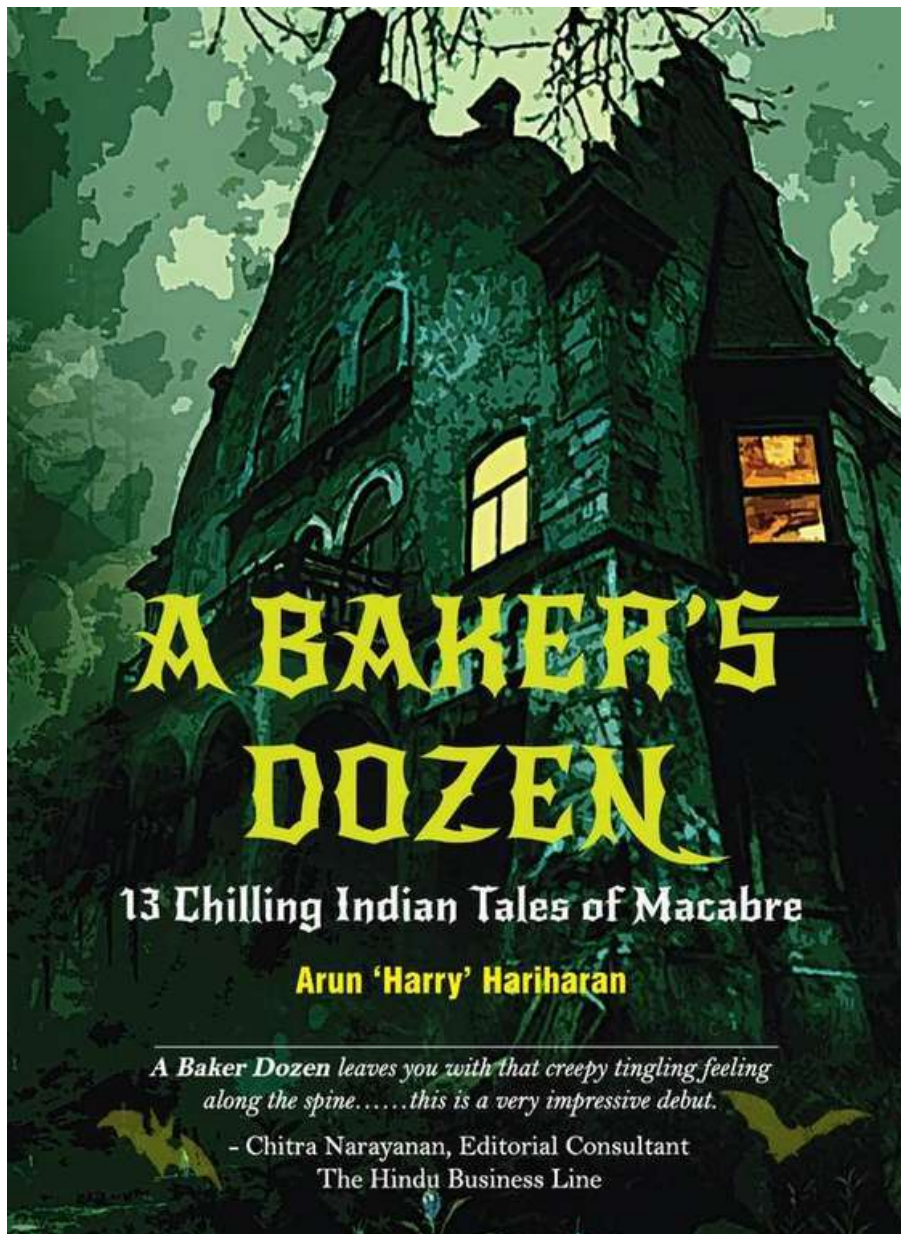
Rajesh: You have been writing many articles, what motivated the book?

Arun: Have always had the writer bug in me. Was the editor of the College of Military Engineering - CME magazine, student editor of the Staff College magazine and have been writing for newspapers such as the Hindustan Times and the Hindu over the years. Had earlier done a coffee table book on the history of Meerut Cantonment while I was posted in Meerut during my last tenure.

As regards this book- "A Baker's Dozen: 13 Chilling Indian Tales of Macabre", three of my passions- travel, history and exploring local legends- motivated me to put together this modest book.

Rajesh: Your maiden book tell us more about it?

Arun: "The Baker's Dozen" is my first book in fiction to be actually mass published and to be up on sale. Though the book is fiction- I have used real- life incidents and places- many where I actually served during my time in the Army. It is from these sights and experiences that I generated the ideas that eventually became short stories. Each story is based in or on some little, forgotten corner of India and has an underlying grain of local fable.



Rajesh: What were the challenges you faced while writing it?

Arun: There is no bigger challenge than the 'Writer's Block' for an author! When the stories flow..they just flow and when they dry up...try as hard as you may to write-it just does not happen. I started this project sometime in 2016-17 and it has taken me close to 5 years to stitch together these stories, make them read worthy and finally fit enough to be picked up by a publisher.

Rajesh: Please share brief about the book content?

Arun: Who doesn't love spooky stories? Don't we all have memories of sitting around in the eerie darkness of the night, recounting stories filled with chilling suspense?

A Baker's Dozen - a collection of thirteen ghostly tales - will definitely leave you with that creepy tingling feeling along the spine. This collection follows the more classical horror route of Poe or Maupassant or our own Ruskin Bond, relying on building up suspense and then delivering the twist at the end. What distinguishes the book is the depth and breadth of its span of interior India, in less than 200 pages, the book takes you on a tour of little-known places of the country, from the Anglo Indian colony of McCluskieganj in Jharkhand to the dusty plains of Meerut to the bend in the South Pennar River in Tamil Nadu, packing in loads of authentic local flavour.

There is considerable time travel in the book too as the short stories are set in different periods - from the War of Independence of 1857 to the 1962 Indo-China conflict to more contemporary times. I have tried to use real-life incidents as the basis of many of the stories, giving them a realistic and macabre twist.

Rajesh: Tell us more about the release of the book?

Arun: The book was released over a Zoom event (due to COVID restrictions) on 31 Oct 2021 (Halloween Day) keeping with the theme of the book. The ceremony was curated by Lt Col Rohit Agarwal, a renowned author of more than 4 books himself and the book launch was done by my Uncle Dr Rajan Hariharan (who is a renowned Gastroenterologist), father Col R Hariharan, VSM (Retd) a veteran of the 1965, 1971 and IPKF Operations and father-in-law AVM S Gopalakrishna, AVSM, VSM (Retd). It was attended by family, friends and well wishers from across the globe.

This was followed up with an in-person 'Meet the Author' and book signing event at the publisher- Creative Crows' stall at the India International trade fair, New Delhi on 25 Nov 2021. The book was reviewed by eminent journalist TCA Srinivasa Raghavan and was published in the Hindu Businessline on 17th Nov 2021. The same can be accessed on the following link:-

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/books/reviews/fiction/spooky-fables-with-a-local-touch/article37540865.ece>



Rajesh: Tell us more about your mentor and guide for writing?

Arun: I basically have two mentors or role models for my writing. My Uncle the late Padmashri Dr H Srinivasan, eminent Leprologist and renowned Tamil Author who wrote under the nom de plume “Saarvagan” and had penned some definitive works of literature in his lifetime has always been a great motivation for me to write. My father Colonel R Hariharan, VSM (Retd), who himself a short story writer, columnist and speaker of repute and has been writing for more than 50 years now, is my mentor and guide to write and go ahead and publish the book. My wife Kalpana has been my constant encouragement and has gone through my stories innumerable number of times and given her candid feedback-which has largely helped me to refine them and make them readable before publication.

Rajesh: Whats your future plans?

Arun: I am working presently on another set of short stories. This time based out of small town India and have been working on a historical novel for a few years now. Hope to make these two see the light of day sometime soon!

Also, as suggested by some of my readers and friends, plan to take up “A Baker’s Dozen” for adaptation on screen as a net series..let’s see how that goes!

Rajesh: Whats your suggestions to officers from Forces network if they want to pursue on similar lines?

Arun: If writing is your passion-just let it flow and unleash the author in you. It is much easier to get published than you would actually imagine. Just another piece of advice (purely my personal views) that if you want to make your book reach a wider audience- then just don’t stick to fauji memoir kind of topics and market it as such-you immediately cut down the potential readers to a very limited number of servicemen and veterans!



Rajesh: How do one contact you for guidance, help or suggestions?

Arun: Happy to help any time basis my limited experience. I can be contacted at hariharan.arun@gmail.com or DM me please at +919909996568

Book Details:

Name : **A BAKER'S DOZEN 13 Chilling Indian Tales of Macabre Paperback – 1 January 2021**

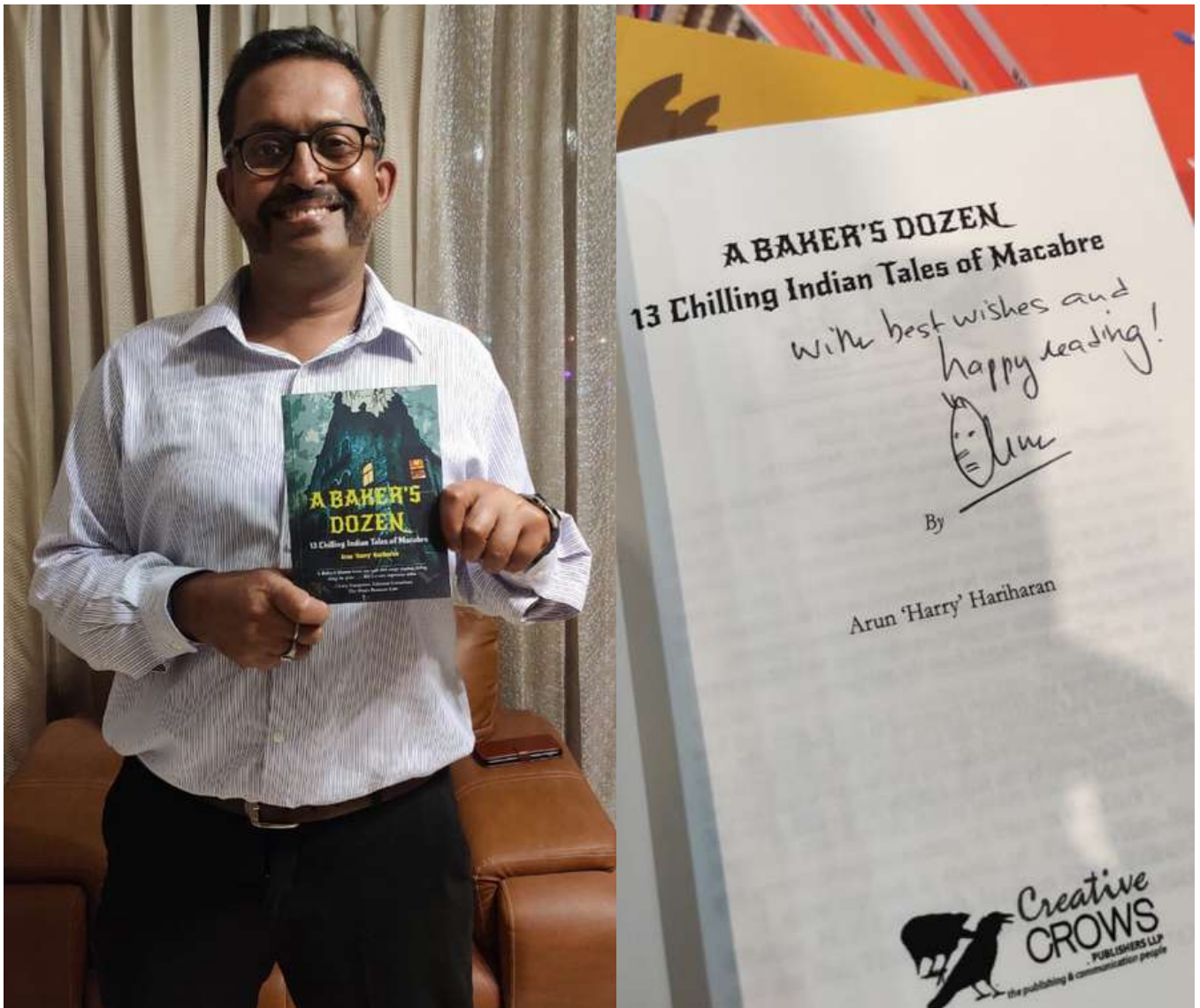
Publication: CREATIVE CROWS PUBLISHERS LLP

Author: Arun 'Harry' Hariharan

Amazon:

https://www.amazon.in/dp/B09HMH8ZCD/ref=cm_sw_r_apan_glt_i_B59YGT7B4KPHOSE2E1KT

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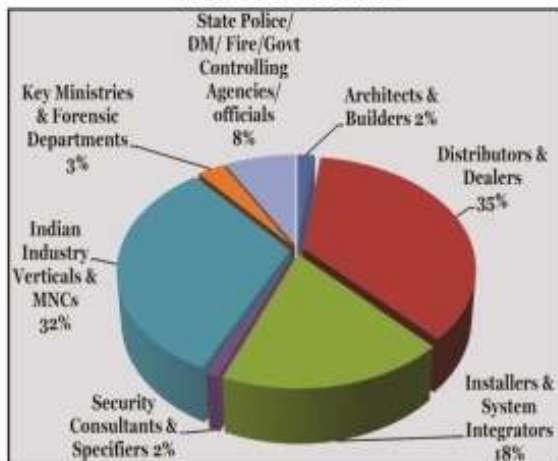
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Book Reviews

The Happiest Man On Earth- The beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor – Eddie Jaku

BY UDAY SHRIWAS

About the Author

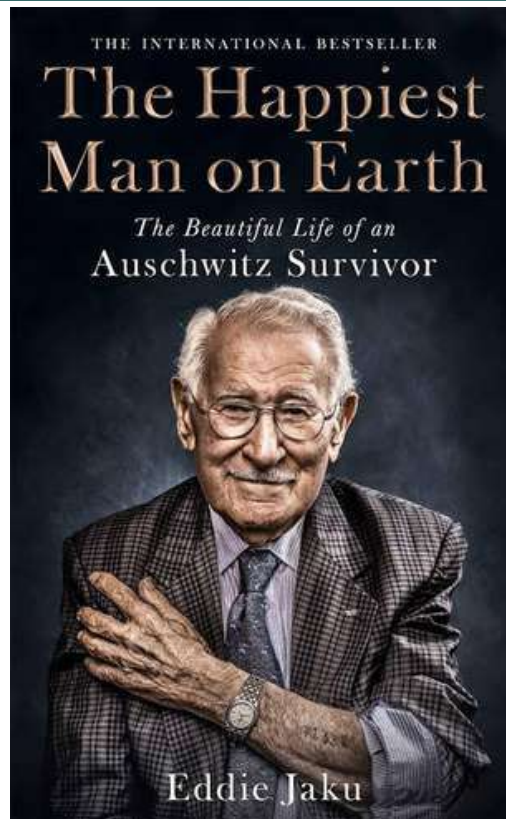


Eddie Jaku OAM was born Abraham Jakubowicz in Germany in 1920.

Eddie Jaku always considered himself a German first, a Jew second. He was proud of his country. But all of that changed on 9 November 1938, when he was beaten, arrested and taken to a concentration camp. Over the next seven years, Eddie faced unimaginable horrors every day, first in Buchenwald, then in Auschwitz camp. In 1945, he was sent on a death march but escaped. Finally, he was rescued by Allied soldiers. He lost family, friends, his country. Because he survived, Eddie made the vow to smile every day.

In 1950, he moved with family to Australia. Eddie volunteered at the Sydney Jewish Museum since its inception in 1992. Eddie and Flore were married for seventy-five years, with two sons, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He died in October 2021, at the age of 101. His book has been translated into thirty-seven languages and his message continues to be shared around the world.



When I heard the name of the Book, I was fascinated. Such a simple title and then next step was to check out the book and what it is all about. Book was ordered when I got to know about the book and what the story is all about.

Well Thanks you so much Eddie Jaku for sharing your life journey with us. The courage you have shown while you lived your life and also equally or rather more courageous was to relive those moments while you shared them with us in this book. Honestly You are in True Sense the Happiest Man on Earth and we are friends for life from the moment I read your book.

The Book Review

I am LUCKY – well this is what I have learnt and it is important that I should repeat this as many times a day as possible. This is my biggest lessons learnt from this book. Eddie has used this so many times in this book. And it is amazing that a man who has seen the WORST period of Human Civilization in recent times- WW II – Auschwitz Camps, has one of the most beautiful Smile.

That is the real essence of this book – Always remember that you are Lucky if you wake up in the morning and you are alive. Being allowed to live one more day, Able to Stay Alive Daily, waking up Alive Daily – Rarely we all think about these things, but when you read this book you wonder that these are very basics but SO very IMPORTANT and we should be Grateful for them every day.

This book Travels through the life journey of Eddie Jaku, from his early childhood to his student days and then the WORST phase of his life spent at Nazi Concentration Camps. In the later part of this book Eddie has shared his wonderful experience of

living a life full of happiness in company of his family, friends and in community which is so much more giving and respectful.

Auschwitz concentration camp - I can only say that this is one of the worst Blots in the history of Human Kind and this book is first-hand account of a Fun Loving Young Man who spent his 7 Years experiencing extreme atrocities. Eddie Jaku was caught and then was a prisoner in this inhuman place and that's where he saw what the world can become when it moves way from Love and Kindness.

But, As the book is about the trials of Eddie Jaku and his struggles and the pains he experienced, it is in true sense is about the Victory of Human Spirit, it is about the Power of Love, about Kindness, about Friendships and about Trust.

It is a book about finding Happiness in some of the smallest things in life. As wonderful as getting a Glimpse of your Friend next day morning when you thought you lost him yesterday. It is just that one friend who was Eddie's sole source of inspiration and the reason to live every moment with gratefulness and courage. He and his friend spent a large part of their time at Auschwitz together and giving each other the much needed warmth and comfort of being family for each other.

Miracles - We all have experienced them in our lives but then we tend to forget them or somehow reason out with logics. Eddie has always trusted in the Power which is far beyond the powers of those who are inhumane. When you read the book you would find the mention of word Miracle so many times because when you see the worst of human actions then every small act of Kindness becomes a miracle and it is for us to believe that yes we are ourselves a moving Miracle and we can bring so much happiness in the lives of others by being Loving and Kind.

Eddie is firm believer of Miracles and I being his friend, my belief in Miracles is now even more deep-rooted. I am so grateful to Eddie for giving me more reasons to stay happy as we both believe and enjoy the miracles in our daily lives,

This Book also in many ways is a complete guide to living life to full.

Be Kind when faced with the worst. For every mentioned (in this book) act or action by the Inhumane Individuals which can be termed as Draconian there are many-many examples in the book which Eddie has shared that put our faith back into humanity, love and being generous.

Human Body is a Greatest Gift - When Eddie went through the brutalities in the Camp, he would wonder how much more the body can take and sustain. But every time when he was down with physical ailments, Eddie found out that our Human Body is a GREATEST machine ever built. And eddie being an Engineer himself would always wonder what reasons we have to cause harm to such a wonderful creation called Human Body.

Eddie through this book has done his best to drive home the message of Service to Society. To respect other cultures, beliefs and lifestyles. The chapter fifteen is so aptly named “We are all part of a Larger Society and our work is Our contribution to a free and safe life for all”.

Eddie is a man who has seen what he never wishes for any other human being and yet he so completely believes that Humans can do wonders if they only share love and kindness and serve the society as he says “Shared Sorrow is HALF Sorrow and Shared Pleasure is Double Pleasure”

Eddie being a thorough Family man has laid lots of emphasis on Family Values and he mentions in this book that what he received from the almighty in his life after the Camps is far more valuable and worth cherishing and he has only and only Love and Gratitude to offer. Being an Auschwitz concentration camp Survivor and who is now a Centenarian, Eddie is Goodness personified. He is so Happy to see his Children, and then his Grand Children running around him and the joy in the moments spent with his Family is beyond words.

Hope is a Great Friend and always keep it to close to yourself even when faced with any situation,

And in words of Eddie **“Love is the Best Medicine”** and we all can offer Love anytime and in abundance.

Thank you so Much Eddie for having shown courage to share your life journey with us. It is your Courage and the support of your Family and Friends that we have learnt so much about living life happily from this book,

To you Eddie – The happiest Man on Earth- a Big HIGH FIVE.



***Capt Uday K Shriwas** was commissioned into the Corps of Signals, and served in various theaters during his service for five years, including in a newly raised RR Battalion. Thereafter he has worked with many renowned Companies, like Kingfisher Airlines, IFB Home Appliances, JK Cement, and Yes Bank Ltd. He enjoys working in the field of Marketing, Business Development, Strategy. He also has keen interest in the field of Personal Branding. He is presently working as Regional Head - Honour First (Defence Vertical) IDFC FIRST Bank*

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

Leisure

The Flying Dolphin

BY VIVEK CHAUDHARY



“Thought Becomes Thing” I always believe thoughts shape our reality and our life. And I’m not the only one to think so. There’s a long tradition of thinkers and spiritual leaders who’ve come to the same conclusion as me (with much more gusto). Among them is Mahatma Gandhi, who put this priceless and magical wisdom into words beautifully when he said:

Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.

– MK Gandhi

The events which happened in my life made my conviction strong and arrived me to a conclusion that the thoughts we have ultimately manifest into the physical world – all of them, with no exception.

For me, being a submariner is one of the most special things I’ve done and will always remain close to my heart. An astonishing experience that pushed me higher each day in pursuit of goals and allowed me to explore the best version of myself.

“These dolphins, when you pin them on your chest, leave deep marks right over your heart that remain long after even the uniforms have been put away.”



Dolphin pinned on chest



Maneuvering the Submarine

Those years with the Navy flew by in the blink of an eye, but I would leave with a decade's worth of valuable lessons that would serve me for the rest of my life. It's not easy to explain how difficult it is to un-don your uniform and hang your boots. It may just look like a uniform to others, but it has given me the chance to live an extraordinary life. Time Flies and soon it was 2017, the year when I bid my final adieu to this glorious service.

While securing admission at IIM Ahmedabad added a feather in my cap yet it couldn't satisfy my thirst and left me yearning for more. I could still feel something in me stirred in the heart, a desire, to do something distinctive. That's when I reignited my once cherished dream of flying. One which would command the same glory like that of being a submariner. Living through this passion was, however full of challenges that would necessitate continuous focus and hard work if I wished to pursue it alongside my new corporate career. But this quest of flying was above everything and therefore, I enrolled myself at Flying club within a few weeks of leaving the Navy.

Walking into the hangar on the first day was filled with excitement— hopping in the cockpit, feeling the rumble of the engine, and soaring uninhibited through the sky— ready to accomplish what's probably been a lifelong dream. The scene in the hangar, young student pilots busy mugging some checklists, reminded me of my training days in the Navy. The first flight lesson is one of the unforgettable moments that will trigger the limbic system and be cemented within the memory for a lifetime. The first take-off gives you the experience of lifting off the runway as the world rushes by.



Fist time in Cockpit

The controls were not as simple as I'd assumed initially. As the popular adage goes in the aviation world: "Anyone can take off a plane, but it takes a pilot to land a plane" the significance of that became clearer as days progressed and the confidence to land seemed to evade me. Understanding climbs, turns, and descents to the relation of pitch and power settings during the approach phase is a precision much more challenging to master than I had expected.

Soon the day arrived when I would take my first solo flight. A first solo flight is like a first independent dive watch which contains mixed emotions of joy for being independent and fears for being alone, wishing the watch to pass safely, and get relived as quickly as possible.

After my first solo flight, I began to fly long cross-country flights. A task similar to many in the Navy as it required extensive preparation of routes, navigation systems, and other crucial aspects. Aviation is full of checklists and you must know what to expect. My Navy experience had taught me to plan beyond the expected.

I was joined on one such flight by a good friend of mine. He seemed confused by



My First Solo

my over-planning and he couldn't resist asking why so much extra preparation was required. The necessity of being prepared, instilled in me through years spent onboard submarines, was difficult to explain to him in a short time. The situation reminded me of Norman Schwarzkopf Quote -

“The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war.”

By the time we took off, it was a swelteringly hot day of June. We were 50 nautical miles away from the base airport when our communication system failed due to the elevated air temperature. I gave multiple attempts to restart the system but to no joy. It was a dire situation where my first real emergency as a pilot resulted in having no communication with airports in the vicinity and having my friend alongside sweating in panic. I'd heard stories of these systems failing in extreme heat, so I had brought a portable handset as a backup. I held my nerve and asked him to communicate with the nearest airport. We called for an immediate return and asked to relay the message of communication failure to our base airport, where we subsequently landed safely. I owe that landing to the vital traits instilled in me by the Navy - such as habitual over preparation and keeping calm under pressure. He witnessed my way of handling the emergency and realized his original concern about over planning was addressed well. This incident taught that young pilot an extra valuable lesson of preparing beyond the expected.

While celebrating our safe return, I saw that young pilot walked up to me and exulted in joy with the term - "Flying Dolphin!". This unique title, the likes of which I had never heard before, would remain for rest of the flying training and thereafter. My whole journey flashed before my eyes, from my first dive watch of surfacing the boat to my first solo of taking off the airplane. I knew earlier it's a hard road ahead and the chances of making it into the cockpit for many are low. Moreover, sustaining equal focus on three fronts such as corporate job, personal life, and flying training for three years wasn't easy.

I felt honoured to be privileged enough to pin both Dolphin as well as Wings on my chest. The lifelong dream, for many reasons, that I had considered once as unattainable ultimately came true. I never realized that the transition from mapping the deep seas as a submariner to scaling the heights of the sky as an Aviator would one day be recognized as an exceptional talent and qualify for a world record.

Although I'm not in control of the world, and I don't know what the future holds, but I understand the power and the magic of thoughts that they hold. These thoughts manifested and allowed me to create my own reality.



Being Honoured with the world record title



With the Awards

In July 2021, I was honoured with the world record title of being 'The first submarine officer in the world who turned into a commercial pilot' by the Asia Book of Records and India Book of Records. Additionally, I am grateful to Vice Admiral Soonil V Bokare, former IGNS for admiring this accomplishment and felicitating me on behalf of the entire submarine fraternity. I must acknowledge that my journey to the cockpit reflects training, discipline, systematic mental and physical conditioning, all of which came from the early days of my submarine life and enabled me to bring glory to this coveted submarine arm.

Leaving the Navy may be the end of a great life for many but It set me on my quest with an opportunity to explore life to the utmost degree and live life less ordinary.

Thinking positive, nourishing, inspiring thoughts actually create a positive world for us. Yes, we can attract what we think about and wish for, but – and it is the only key. By doing so, we can actively participate in shaping our reality. Everything I ever thought has brought to me where I am right now.



Lt Cdr Vivek Chaudhary is an alumnus of 74 Naval academy course and 77th basic Submarine course. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy in Jan 2007 as a Short service commission Officer. He served and independent of charge of INS Sindhugosh, INS Sindhushastra, INS Sindhukirti and INS Virbahu. He was also a co-editor of Persicope magazine during the publication year in 2012. His last appointment was SO to ACNS Submarines at IHQ, MoD and he was released from service in Apr 2017 after completing 10 years. He is currently a commercial pilot and specialised on the ATR fleet of commercial Aircraft.

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

Leisure

Military Life - Demystified!

BY GAUTAM VIJAY

***Why should we respect our soldiers so much? Aren't they just doing their job?
What do they even do when there is no war around?***

Questions like these come up quite often.

In India, Military is perceived in contrasts. On one hand, people have immense respect for it because of its supreme role during wars in the past and continued terrorist incursions. On the other hand, any perk provided to the military men is looked down upon as an inferior use of the tax payers' money.

A major chunk of the society still thinks, 'Men in Uniform' spend their time only in partying and enjoying the free liquor.

In a common man's life, Military is usually remembered during the Independence Day and/or the Republic Day. That's when Military gets pampered by the media as well. All the TV channels & Radio stations start playing patriotic songs, war-based movies, etc. Other times when Military re-surfaces into common awareness is during a terrorist attack, recently famed surgical/air strikes or a natural calamity.

When I think about answering questions related to the misinformed perceptions about Indian Military, I get reminded of my days in the Armed Forces & the incredible experiences it offered me. Experiences which weren't always pleasant & easy, but which taught me a lot about life, about this world, & most importantly about myself. The separation from family and loved ones, the festivals away from home, the postings in areas which one could barely even spot on a map, the opportunity to meet a hugely diverse set of people & so on.



Opportunity to Meet diverse set of People

There is a lot to this profession, it is an ocean in itself which you can't fully comprehend till you jump in and take a swim. Military is much more than just war-time heroism, border stand-offs, non-stop parties, & subsidised alcohol. This profession is capable of pulling one out of the narrow well one might be living within, & expose them to the greater & grander scheme of things. I will attempt to exemplify this through highlighting the key contrasts of my story.

I was born and brought up in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It's a dry state with absolutely horrible summers and a very mundane lifestyle where people are mostly business oriented. We don't even have any Regiment in the Indian Army related to Gujarat. High school, followed by Medical college and I became a Doctor, yes a real doctor who treats patients. If you recall my first post, I was always inclined to join the forces, so I appeared for the interviews and tests at Delhi.

I got selected and got commissioned at Base Hospital Delhi Cantonment. Training was done at Officer's Training College, Lucknow, where we learnt how to wear proper uniform and walk straight with pride and honor, follow schedule, survive in jungle, fire weapons, field exercises, sand model exercises, military history etc. The last week was crucial for all when postings were announced. Everyone knew it will be either North-East or J&K. The training director announced - "Chest number 64, xxx Field Hospital" (Can't mention exact details for security reasons). Immediately we opened map, yes paper maps (This is Feb, 2009 by the way). So, the map said, Captain Gautam Vijay will be moving to Drass, Kargil, second coldest inhabitable place in the world.

Fellow officer said "Dude, you're dead", but I shouted in joy "Yes, thats where I always wanted to go.' The very location where the Kargil war took place. I was 23 at that time.



At Kargil serving the Locals at a medical camp

Nobody could imagine what I felt when I stepped out of the vehicle to see 8 ft. of snow around me and feel the freezing chill of -30 degrees. That feeling when I first looked at the mighty "Tiger Hill", the sense of pride when I gave my first presentation to the commander about casualty evacuation plan from "Tololing". Hundreds of medical camps at the tiny villages which don't even appear on the map. The experience of interacting with people, witnessing the untouched natural beauty of the landscapes; these are some of the incredible events which can't be described easily in words.



Then came the last but the most amazing tenure of my life, posting to the "Siachen Glacier" - "Highest Battlefield in the world". As much as I was excited, I was terrified too with the mere thought of life there without fresh food, electricity and no cell phones. 1 month of rigorous training at the "Siachen Base Camp", 15 days of "Acclimatization and 13 days of climb, yes 13 days of climb to reach the post where I was supposed to serve for next 90 days. The 90 days, which were going to change my life forever and they surely did.



I survived an Avalanche, rescued soldiers from helicopter crash and attended many critical injuries at 21,000 ft. and -40 degree temperature. Awarded Commendation medal from the then Army Chief - Gen. V.K Singh, I came back with many injuries, but many more memories and experiences.



The time in the peaks of Himalayas was immediately followed by a mountaineering expedition to Mt. Bhagirathi ahead of Gangotri and then Camel Safari Expedition between Badmer and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. The two years in the Thar desert exposed me to the contrast of people staying in small groups as nomads, different cultures, lifestyles, food, Rattle snakes, scorpions and a plethora of many other things.

I left the Military after serving for 5 years. I was 28, wanting to pursue higher studies, and I did my Masters from the US. However, the questions still kept coming, and I decided to share my journey to help people get a sneak-peak into the spectrum of life in the Military.

After all, everyone who is in the military is not a gun toting warrior, waiting for the next chance to pull the trigger.

Jai Hind !!



Maj (Dr) Gautam Vijay - An SSC Medical Corps officer served at Drass, Kargil, Siachen, and Badmer from 2008 till 2013. He had a close escape from an Avalanche in the Glacier and was awarded COAS commendation card for rescuing 9 soldiers out of it and later 2 pilots off a Heli crash. Was part of the expedition to Mt Bhagirathi in 2011 and a Camel Safari expedition in Jaisalmer. Took release in 2013 and went to the US to pursue higher studies. Post studies he has been part of the corporate world - into Operations Management for last 7 years, recently joined Infosys Pune as Senior Consultant in their Healthcare Domain.

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Chandigarh



The Forces Network Meets at Chandigarh on a winter afternoon.

Names of officers L to R :

Standing I Row : Maj Sandeep Sangwan; Capt Neena Kanwar; Capt Sharanjeet; Cdr Supneet Grewal;

Standing II Row: Lt Col Amit Datta; Lt Col Anil Sahni; Col Iqbal Singh; Lt Col Jaimandeep Singh

Standing III Row: Capt Pankaj Sharma ; Maj Rajkumar Rathee ; Capt Uday shriwas

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