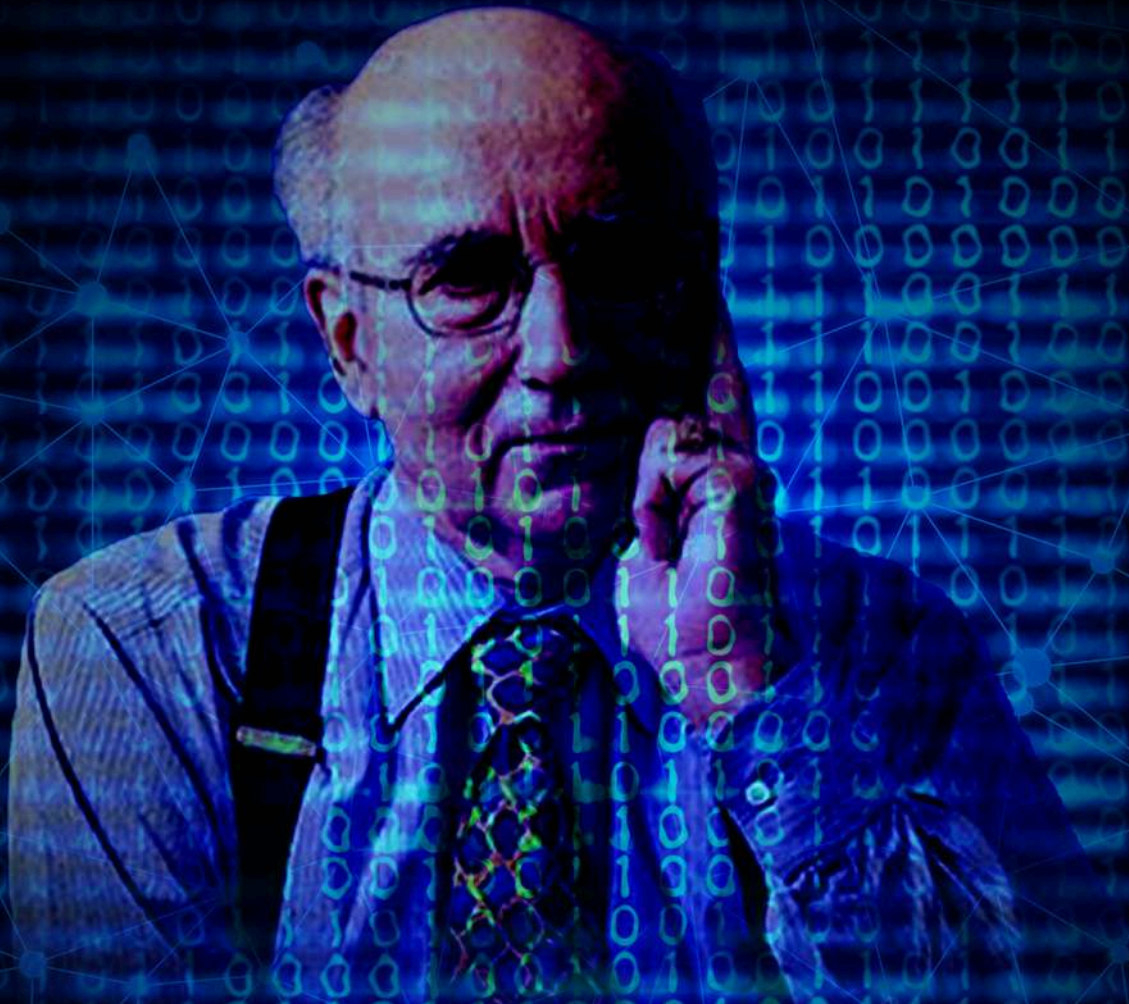


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E-ZINE

Magazine for military veterans in the corporate
February 2025, Volume VII, Issue 02



DIGITAL MARKETING AN EXCITING CAREER



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From the Editor

Dear Readers,

In today's hyperconnected world, digital marketing has become one of the most dynamic and rewarding career fields. For military veterans transitioning into civilian life, it offers a unique opportunity to leverage their skills and experience while embracing cutting-edge technology and creativity. The discipline is not just about selling products online; it's about storytelling, problem-solving, and forging connections in the digital age—an environment where veterans can thrive. We at Forces Network have taken this month the theme as **Digital Marketing: An Exciting Career**

Veterans often possess qualities that are perfectly aligned with the demands of digital marketing. Strategic thinking, adaptability and leadership skills are hallmarks of military training and are essential in the fast-paced world of online marketing. Campaign management, for instance, requires the same level of planning and execution that military operations demand. The ability to analyze data, assess risks, and make informed decisions mirrors the tactical mindset cultivated during service.

With many online certifications and training programs available, veterans can acquire the technical skills and combine them with their inherent strengths to excel in this field. The digital marketing industry is constantly evolving, offering endless opportunities for growth and innovation. Veterans can explore various roles, from brand management to content strategy, and even specialize in emerging fields like influencer marketing or artificial intelligence-driven campaigns. This dynamic environment allows for continuous learning, a quality that resonates with veterans who are used to adapting to new challenges.

One of the most attractive aspects of digital marketing is its flexibility. Many roles in this field offer remote work opportunities, making it easier for veterans to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, freelance and consulting opportunities are abundant, allowing veterans to work on their terms and explore diverse projects. With their unique backgrounds and a willingness to embrace new technologies, veterans are well-positioned to excel in this exciting and ever-evolving field. For those seeking a dynamic, impactful career, digital marketing stands out as a natural choice.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this edition. You can email me your feedback, directly at forcesnetworkz@gmail.com.



Digitally Yours,

Capt Rajesh Nair
Editor, ForceNet E-Zine

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A NOTE FOR THE READERS

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

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

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

Online Feedback / Review

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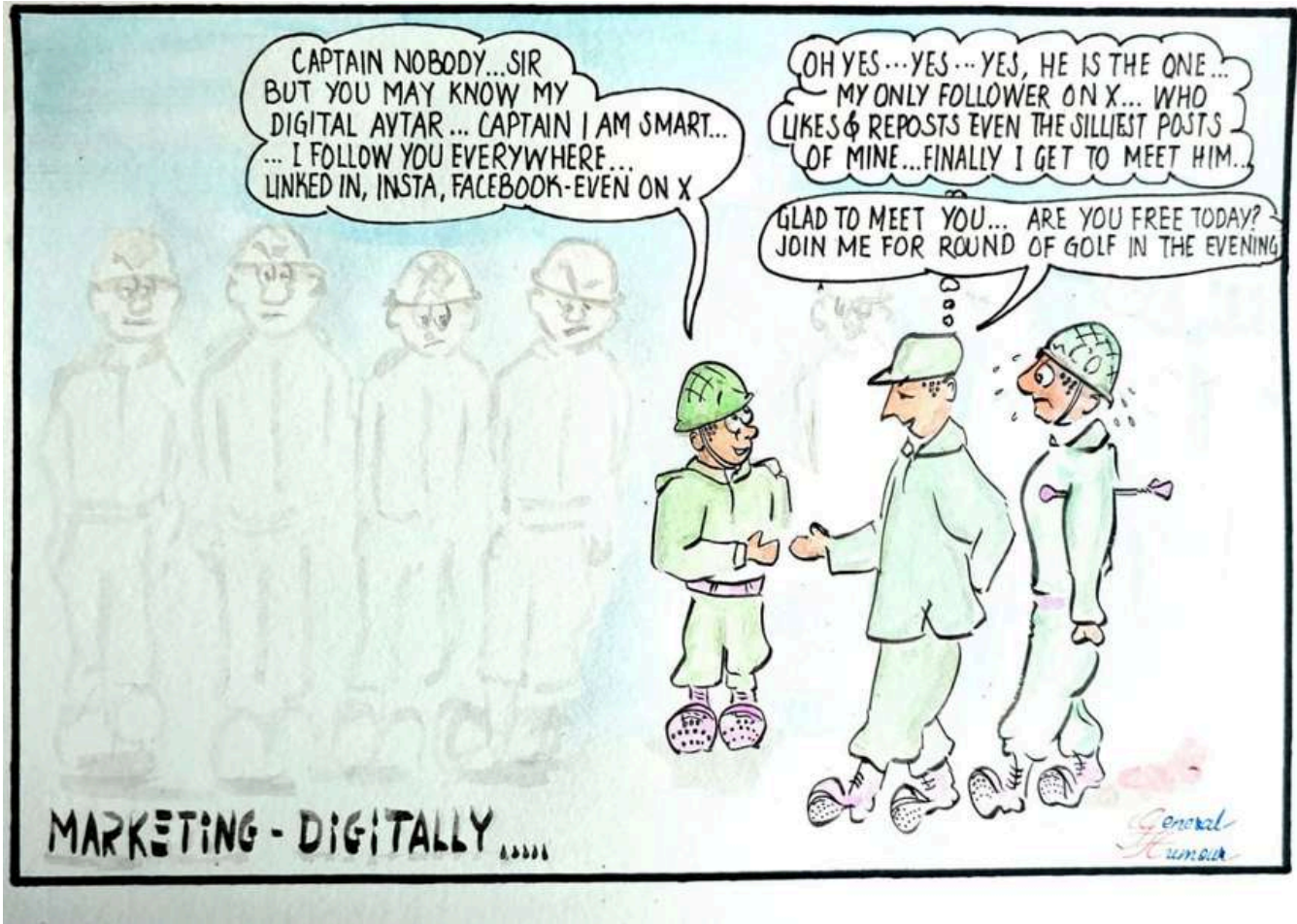
***Feedback on:* Knowledge Bytes Plantation Farming in Cardamom Hill, Idukki: A Spotlight on Cardamom and Pepper BY J O H N N Y - Jan 25**

Johnny highlighted his farm practices on specialised crops like cardamom and pepper. What motivated me to write this feedback is that, Johnny is a young ex-naval officer with my age group and is doing his job and simultaneously taking care of his family farming plantation. Johnny through use of technology and mechanisation have changed the scenario the way traditional farming is done. Johnny narrated various challenges he is facing while doing farming and had offered various solutions in his article. He has also given the perspective how government is pitching and empowering farmers with subsidies, training programs and infrastructure building. Farming is an opportunity for veterans which Johnny and Forces E Zine Magazine have recognised in their Jan 2025 issue. I wish Johnny and his family to grow and progress in his future aspirations. Also, great talking to a humble man Johnny and I will definitely meet him one day on his farm.

Additional Suggestions:

Forces E Zine Magazine can explore various sub sectors in agriculture like seed bank and its warehousing and can highlight in their magazine.

LT CDR VARUN DHAND



Amit Dalvi



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Digital Marketing: An Exciting Career

Theme Articles

Theme Article

Exploring New Horizons: A Veteran's Guide to Digital Marketing as a Civilian Career

BY IQBAL SINGH

As military veterans prepare to transition into civilian life, the search for meaningful and sustainable careers becomes a central focus. Traditional career options often involve law enforcement, government contracting, or security services. While these are familiar and rewarding fields, today's veterans have more opportunities than ever before, thanks to the rise of the digital economy. One particularly promising industry is Digital Marketing, where veterans can leverage their discipline, leadership, and problem-solving skills to thrive in this dynamic field.

This article serves as a comprehensive guide to digital marketing, outlining its various subdomains, career opportunities, and pathways to success. Whether you're looking for a stable corporate job or eager to start your own business, digital marketing offers the versatility, creativity, and financial rewards that many veterans seek.



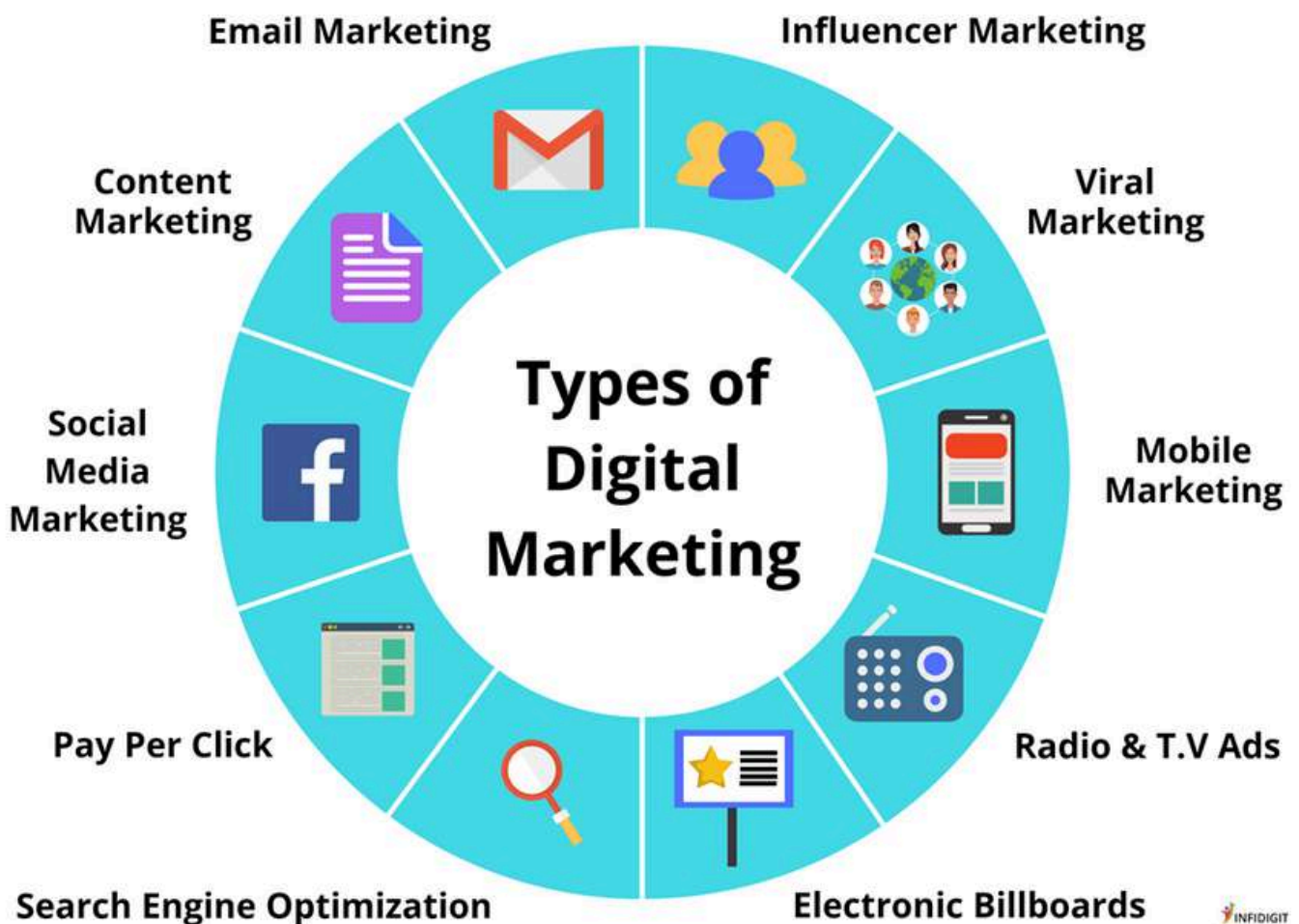
A Digital Marketer Can Work as a Freelancer From Home

Image Source: [Freepik](#)

1. What Exactly is Digital Marketing?

Digital Marketing is a broad term that encompasses all marketing efforts using the internet or electronic devices. Businesses leverage digital channels such as search engines, social media platforms, email, and websites to connect with their target audience. Unlike traditional marketing methods (e.g., TV, print ads, billboards), digital marketing allows for precise targeting, real-time feedback, and measurable results.

Digital marketing can be thought of as a bridge between companies and potential customers in the digital world. Whether it's creating ads for Google searches or crafting engaging social media posts, digital marketing helps brands reach people exactly where they are—online.



Different branches of digital marketing (SEO, Content Marketing, Social Media.

Image Source: Infinidigit

2. The Subdomains of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a vast field with various subdomains, each with its own focus and career opportunities. Veterans entering this field can choose from any of the following paths, depending on their interests and skill sets:

a. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO refers to optimizing a website or content so that it ranks higher in search engine results pages (SERPs). This involves both technical and creative strategies aimed at improving visibility in organic (non-paid) search results.

Career Roles:

- **SEO Specialist:** An SEO Specialist is a hands-on practitioner, deeply involved in the day-to-day execution of search engine optimization strategies. Their core responsibilities include conducting keyword research, implementing on-page optimizations (like meta descriptions and header tags), building high-quality backlinks, creating and optimizing website content, and monitoring website performance using tools like Google Analytics and Search Console. They are focused on the practical application of SEO techniques to improve a website's visibility and rankings on search engine results pages (SERPs). They are often responsible for specific aspects of the SEO strategy, such as blog content optimization or technical SEO audits.
- **SEO Manager:** An SEO Manager is responsible for the strategic planning, implementation, and management of a website's overall SEO program. They oversee SEO Specialists and often work with other marketing teams (content, social media, web development) to ensure SEO is integrated into the broader marketing strategy. They develop and refine SEO strategies based on data analysis, competitor research, and industry trends. A key aspect of their role involves setting KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), monitoring performance against those goals, and reporting on progress to stakeholders. The SEO Manager focuses on the big picture, leading the team and guiding the overall direction of the SEO efforts.
- **SEO Analyst:** An SEO Analyst is a data-driven role focused on analyzing website performance and identifying areas for improvement. They dig deep into data from Google Analytics, Google Search Console, and other SEO tools to understand user behaviour,

identify keyword opportunities, and track the impact of SEO efforts. They create reports that provide insights into organic traffic, rankings, and other key metrics, communicating their findings to the SEO team and other stakeholders. An SEO Analyst uses data to validate SEO strategies, identify trends, and recommend changes to improve performance. Their work is crucial for data-backed decision-making and continuous optimization within the SEO program

Skills & Qualifications Required:

- **Understanding of search engine algorithms:** A fundamental aspect of digital marketing, understanding search engine algorithms is crucial for achieving organic visibility. This involves comprehending how search engines like Google rank websites, considering factors like relevance, authority, user experience, and content quality. Keeping up-to-date with algorithm updates is vital, as these changes directly impact how websites are indexed, ranked, and ultimately found by users. A strong grasp of these complex formulas and their nuances allows digital marketers to strategically optimize content and technical aspects of a website, increasing its chances of ranking higher in search engine results pages and attracting organic traffic. This understanding isn't static; it requires constant learning and adaptation to the ever-evolving world of search.
- **Proficiency with tools like Google Analytics and SEMrush:** Digital marketers rely heavily on analytics and research platforms to inform their strategies. Proficiency with tools like Google Analytics is essential for tracking website traffic, user behavior, and conversion rates. This data enables marketers to understand which channels are performing well, identify areas for improvement, and measure the success of campaigns. SEMrush, on the other hand, provides in-depth insights into keyword performance, competitor analysis, backlink profiles, and technical SEO audits. Mastery of these tools empowers marketers to make data-driven decisions, optimize their efforts, and ultimately improve the overall performance of their digital campaigns. These platforms provide crucial insights and allow for effective analysis of digital marketing efforts.

- **Keyword research and link-building skills:** Two critical pillars of search engine optimization (SEO), keyword research and link building are vital for achieving high search rankings. Keyword research involves identifying the terms and phrases that users are actually typing into search engines when looking for products, services, or information related to a business. This data informs the content strategy and ensures that website content is relevant to user search intent. Link building, on the other hand, focuses on acquiring high-quality backlinks from other reputable websites, which signal to search engines that a website is authoritative and trustworthy. Together, these skills enable digital marketers to attract relevant organic traffic, establish online authority, and improve overall search engine visibility. These activities are not isolated, they work in tandem to boost website rankings.

b. Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

PPC advertising involves placing paid ads on search engines or social media platforms. Advertisers pay a fee each time their ad is clicked, making it a results-driven model. Google Ads and Facebook Ads are among the most popular PPC platforms.

Career Roles:

- **PPC Specialist:** A PPC Specialist is a hands-on expert focused on the daily execution and optimization of pay-per-click (PPC) advertising campaigns. Their work involves tasks such as setting up campaigns on platforms like Google Ads and Bing Ads, conducting keyword research, writing compelling ad copy, managing bids, monitoring campaign performance, and making adjustments to maximize results within a set budget. They are adept at using various tools and platforms to implement effective PPC strategies and are responsible for the detailed execution of these tactics. They are focused on the day-to-day operations ensuring campaigns run efficiently and achieve their objectives. The work is detailed and requires a keen eye for data analysis and optimization.
- **PPC Campaign Manager:** A PPC Campaign Manager takes a more strategic and oversight-oriented role in managing PPC advertising efforts. They are responsible for developing and implementing overall PPC strategies aligned with marketing goals, managing larger budgets, and overseeing the performance of multiple campaigns.

- They direct the work of PPC Specialists, ensuring they are executing according to the campaign strategy. They also conduct in-depth performance analysis, identify trends, and work with the marketing team to align paid search with overall marketing efforts. This role focuses on the big picture of PPC, managing budgets, setting overall objectives, and directing the work of the specialist. A PPC campaign manager is also responsible for reporting on campaign performance to management and key stakeholders.

Digital Advertising Manager: A Digital Advertising Manager has a broader scope than a PPC Manager, overseeing all forms of paid digital advertising, not just PPC. This includes managing strategies and budgets across various platforms such as social media ads (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), display advertising networks, and video ads (YouTube), in addition to search advertising. They are responsible for developing cohesive, multi-channel advertising strategies, working closely with creative teams, and tracking the performance of all paid advertising initiatives. They must have a broad understanding of various advertising platforms and technologies. Their role is focused on the holistic approach to digital advertising, covering the strategic, budget-management, and performance of all paid initiatives to maximize ROI across all channels. They also often manage teams of PPC or other specialists and are responsible for reporting advertising results to management.

Skills & Qualifications Required:

- Analytical skills for campaign performance tracking
- Experience with bidding strategies and ad creation
- Knowledge of platforms like Google Ads and Facebook Business Manager

c. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing focuses on creating content and engaging with audiences on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This subdomain is highly creative and interactive, enabling brands to build communities around their products.

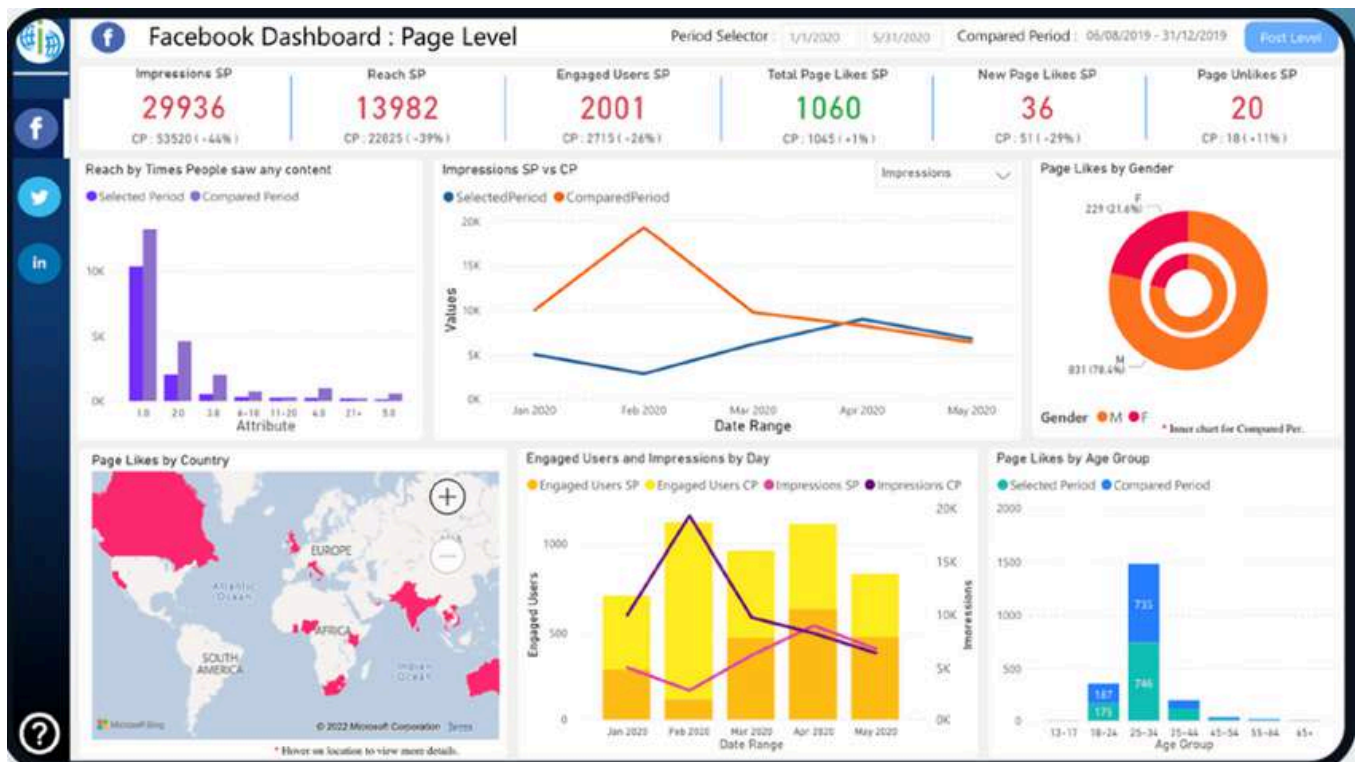
Career Roles:

- **Social Media Manager:** A Social Media Manager is responsible for developing and implementing a brand's social media strategy across various platforms. They craft and schedule engaging content, manage social media calendars, monitor brand mentions, and engage with followers. They're focused on growing a brand's social media presence, increasing engagement, and driving traffic to the website or other desired endpoints. This role involves analyzing social media performance data to refine strategies, staying abreast of platform updates and trends, and collaborating with other marketing teams. They need a blend of creative and analytical skills to curate content that resonates with the target audience, build brand awareness, and generate results through social media channels. They are also responsible for maintaining brand voice and consistency across all social media platforms.
- **Community Manager:** A Community Manager is the voice of a brand within its online communities, fostering relationships and building a loyal following. Their primary focus is on engaging directly with the audience, moderating online discussions, and creating a positive and interactive community experience. They respond to comments and messages, participate in conversations, and address concerns, working to build trust and rapport between the brand and its audience. They monitor community sentiment, gather feedback, and identify opportunities for improvement. This role requires strong communication and interpersonal skills, along with the ability to understand and represent the brand's values and mission. They are the primary point of contact for community members and work to strengthen loyalty and engagement.
- **Content Strategist:** A Content Strategist is responsible for the overall planning and development of a brand's content strategy. They determine the types of content to be produced (blogs, videos, social media posts, etc.), the platforms on which it will be distributed, and the target audience for each piece of content. They conduct audience research, identify content gaps, and develop a content calendar aligned with business goals. They work closely with writers, designers, and other content creators to ensure that all content is high-quality, engaging, and effective in achieving its objectives. This role requires a deep understanding of audience needs, content marketing best practices, and how different forms of content can contribute to the

overall marketing strategy. The content strategist focuses on the bigger picture of how content can achieve strategic goals.

Skills & Qualifications Required:

- Strong communication skills
- Ability to create compelling and shareable content
- Familiarity with scheduling tools like Hootsuite or Buffer



A social media dashboard showing metrics

d. Email Marketing

Email marketing remains one of the most effective digital marketing channels, delivering personalized content directly to subscribers. Whether it's newsletters, promotions, or personalized messages, email marketing helps companies nurture leads and retain customers.

Career Roles:

- **Email Marketing Specialist:** An Email Marketing Specialist is a hands-on role focused on the tactical execution of email marketing campaigns. They are responsible for tasks such as designing and coding email templates, segmenting email lists, crafting compelling email copy, scheduling sends, and monitoring campaign performance. They ensure emails are delivered correctly, are mobile-friendly, and adhere to email marketing best practices. They are

proficient in using email marketing platforms and are focused on the day-to-day creation and deployment of email campaigns that effectively engage subscribers and drive conversions. This role requires an eye for detail, strong writing skills, and a solid understanding of email marketing techniques to ensure maximum campaign performance.

- **Email Campaign Manager:** An Email Campaign Manager takes a more strategic role in planning and managing a company's email marketing efforts. They are responsible for developing overall email marketing strategies aligned with marketing goals, managing larger email lists, and overseeing the performance of multiple email campaigns. They will often work with the Email Marketing Specialist, ensuring the campaigns are implemented according to the overall email strategy. They analyze performance data, identify trends, and work with other marketing teams to integrate email marketing into overall marketing efforts. They also manage email budgets, create reporting on campaign results for management and stakeholders, and ensure compliance with all email marketing regulations. This role is more focused on the bigger picture of email marketing and on ensuring campaigns are delivering on overall business objectives.

Skills & Qualifications Required:

- Understanding of email automation tools (e.g., MailChimp, HubSpot)
- Copywriting and design skills for email templates
- Analytical skills for open rates, click-through rates (CTR), and conversion tracking

e. Content Marketing

Content marketing focuses on creating valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and engage a specific audience. This content can come in many forms, such as blog posts, articles, videos, and infographics. Content marketing aims to build brand trust and convert leads into customers over time.

Career Roles:

- **Content Writer:** A Content Writer is a creative professional who produces written material for a variety of digital platforms. They are responsible for crafting compelling and informative blog posts, website copy, social media updates, email newsletters, and other forms of written content. Their role involves conducting research,

understanding audience needs, and adapting their writing style to suit different formats and channels. Content Writers focus on creating engaging and well-written pieces that capture the brand's voice and achieve specific marketing goals, such as driving traffic, increasing brand awareness, or generating leads. They must have a strong command of language, attention to detail, and the ability to meet deadlines consistently. They work to ensure that the written material effectively communicates the brand's message to its intended audience.

- **Content Strategist:** A Content Strategist takes a holistic and strategic approach to content creation, overseeing the entire content lifecycle. They are responsible for defining the overall content strategy, including identifying target audiences, determining key content pillars, and selecting appropriate platforms for content distribution. They conduct research to understand audience needs and preferences and create content calendars that align with business goals and marketing objectives. Content Strategists work closely with writers, designers, and other content creators, guiding them and ensuring all content aligns with the overarching strategy. They also analyze content performance, identifying what's working and what's not, to inform future content planning. Their focus is on the strategic planning of content, how it fits into the overall digital marketing strategy and its ultimate business impact.
- **Video Marketer:** A Video Marketer is a creative professional specializing in the planning, production, and promotion of video content for digital marketing purposes. They are responsible for developing video marketing strategies aligned with business objectives, from concept development and scriptwriting to video production and editing. They must understand how to optimize video content for various platforms, including YouTube, social media channels, and websites, to maximize visibility and engagement. Video Marketers analyze video performance data, using metrics to understand viewer behaviour and optimize for improved results. They also keep up-to-date with the latest video marketing trends and technologies. They focus on leveraging video to communicate a brand's message effectively, drive engagement, and achieve marketing goals across multiple channels.

Skills & Qualifications Required:

- Strong writing and storytelling ability
- Knowledge of SEO to ensure content ranks on search engines
- Familiarity with content management systems (e.g., WordPress)

3. Roles, Skills, and Qualifications in Digital Marketing

Depending on the subdomain you're interested in, the required skills and qualifications will vary. Here's a summary of the general qualifications veterans need to succeed in digital marketing:

- **Analytical Skills:** Digital marketing is data-driven. You need to be comfortable interpreting campaign metrics and making adjustments based on data.
- **Creativity:** Veterans with a knack for creativity will find themselves excelling in areas like content marketing and social media.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Most roles in digital marketing require some familiarity with tools like Google Analytics, email automation platforms, and social media management systems.
- **Communication:** Whether you're creating content or managing PPC campaigns, clear and persuasive communication is crucial.

4. Pathway to Upskilling: How Veterans Can Learn Digital Marketing Skills

Transitioning into digital marketing doesn't require a formal degree. In fact, many successful marketers are self-taught or have completed online courses. Veterans looking to upskill can explore these pathways:

- **Online Courses & Certifications:**
 - **Google Digital Garage:** Free courses covering SEO, PPC, and analytics.
 - **HubSpot Academy:** A range of certifications, including inbound marketing and email marketing.
 - **Coursera & Udemy:** Affordable courses on social media, SEO, and content marketing.
- **Bootcamps:** Intensive, short-term bootcamps like General Assembly provide hands-on training in various aspects of digital marketing.
- **Apprenticeships & Internships:** Some agencies offer digital marketing apprenticeships, allowing veterans to gain practical experience while learning on the job.

5. Successful Digital Marketers & Influencers

Many digital marketers and influencers have successfully built lucrative careers by mastering specific digital marketing strategies. Here are a few examples:

- **Neil Patel:** One of the most well-known SEO experts, Neil Patel has built a multi-million-dollar business by helping companies rank on search engines. His estimated net worth is around \$30 million.
- **Pat Flynn:** A former air force pilot, Flynn transitioned into content marketing and affiliate marketing, generating passive income through his podcast and blog. His net worth is estimated to be around \$4 million.
- **Huda Kattan:** Known for her beauty blog and makeup line, Huda Kattan leveraged social media (primarily Instagram) to become a top influencer. With over 50 million followers, her brand generates over \$200 million annually.



NEIL PATEL

CO-FOUNDER OF NP
DIGITAL & MARKETING
EXPERT

**TECHNIQUES FOR LEADING
INTERNET BRANDS**

LNL **NP**

A picture of Neil Patel SEO Expert and Founder of NP Digital

6. Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Digital Marketing

Veterans looking to start their own businesses will find a wealth of opportunities in digital marketing. From running a freelance marketing agency to starting an eCommerce store, the entrepreneurial possibilities are endless.

One notable success story is **Gary Vaynerchuk**, who transformed his family's wine business through digital marketing. Now a multi-millionaire, he runs VaynerMedia, a full-service digital agency.

- **Freelancing Opportunities:** Platforms like Upwork and Fiverr allow digital marketers to freelance in fields such as social media management, content writing, and SEO consulting.
- **Starting a Digital Marketing Agency:** Veterans can use their leadership skills to build and manage a team, offering marketing services to businesses. This model can scale quickly, with many agencies pulling in six-figure revenues within a few years.



Digital marketing agencies offer veterans a pathway to entrepreneurial success

Conclusion

The digital world offers a wealth of opportunities for veterans transitioning to civilian life. Whether you're looking for a job or interested in starting your own business, digital marketing provides a modern, flexible, and rewarding career option. By leveraging your military discipline, strategic thinking, and leadership skills, you can carve out a successful and meaningful career in this thriving industry.

Veterans no longer need to limit their career options to traditional fields. By stepping into the world of digital marketing, you can find both purpose and financial success in the rapidly evolving digital economy. With some curiosity, commitment to learning, and the right strategy, you can turn your post-military life into a new chapter of success.



Lt Col Iqbal Singh (retd) is an infantry officer who started his career with the Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. He is currently a senior technology executive with Google based at Gurgaon, India. He is firmly of the belief that tech is an enabler and your friend. He is the Founder of Forces Network – the Network of the military veterans in the corporate. He believes that there are no barriers: all the barriers exist only in one's mind. It was with that firm conviction that Iqbal started the now famous ABCT (Any Body Can Tech) Program in Forces Network in 2019. Under this program non-tech officers were taken to cloud certification level. Over 40 participants got certified from Microsoft in cloud computing under this program. He is convinced that military personnel can easily transition to tech roles with some upskilling.

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

Theme Article

The Creator Economy: A New Frontier for Veterans of the Indian Defence Forces

BY ANKUR MEHRA

The landscape of media consumption has undergone a seismic shift. We've moved beyond the era of passive audiences and one-way broadcasts. Today, we live in the "Creator Economy," where individuals, armed with smartphones and internet connectivity, are shaping narratives, building audiences, and carving out unique niches for themselves.

Unlike traditional media, where content creation and distribution were largely controlled by a few powerful entities, the Creator Economy empowers individuals to become content creators, curators, and entrepreneurs. This democratization of media has led to an explosion of diverse voices, innovative content formats, and new avenues for monetization.

The Creator Economy offers unprecedented opportunities for individuals from all walks of life. It's a level playing field where discipline, creativity, and consistent effort can lead to remarkable success. This is particularly relevant for our esteemed veteran community.

The Rise of the Creator Economy

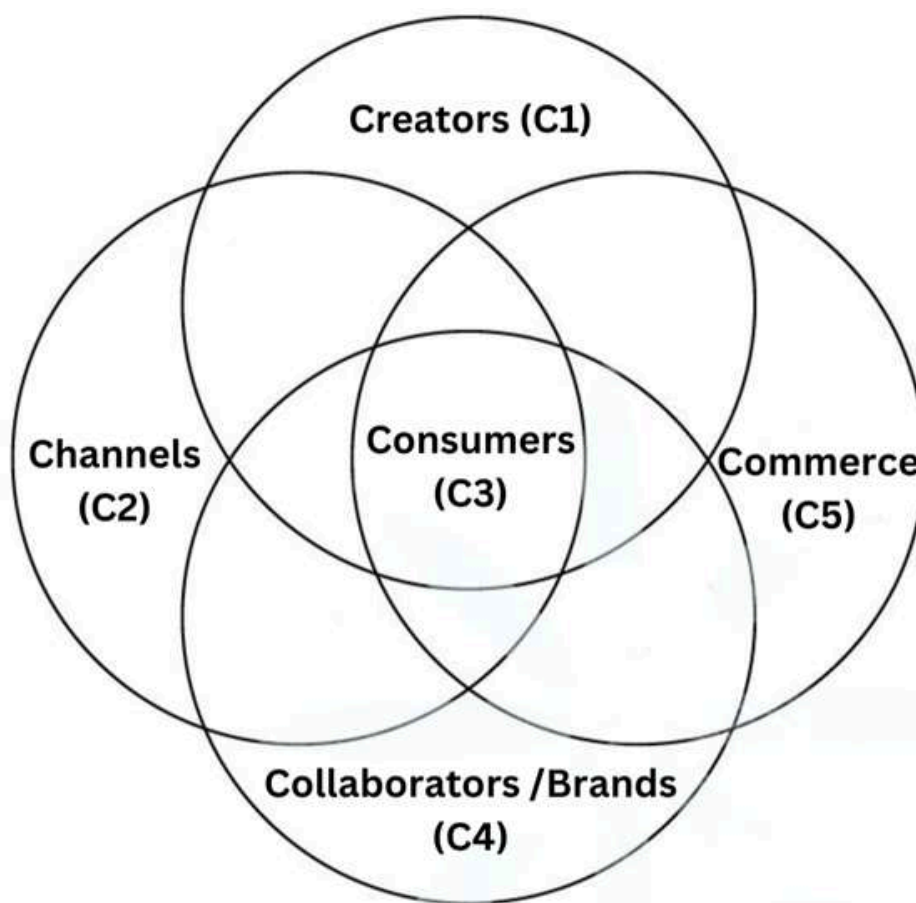
A report by Goldman Sachs underscores the rapid growth of this sector, projecting its value to nearly double to \$480 billion by 2027. This surge is fueled by factors such as the increasing influence of social media, the rise of influencer marketing, and the growing demand for authentic and personalized content.

This surge is fueled by the proliferation of digital platforms, the increasing accessibility of high-speed internet, and a shift in consumer behavior towards authentic and relatable content. These trends indicate that the Creator Economy is not a fleeting trend but a significant economic force shaping the future of work and commerce.

For veterans of the Indian Army, understanding and engaging with this burgeoning economy can open doors to new opportunities. The skills honed during military service—discipline, strategic thinking, teamwork, adaptability and leadership—are invaluable in navigating this dynamic landscape.

Understanding the Creator Economy with the 5C Framework

To fully grasp the mechanics of the Creator Economy, I have formulated a simple 5C Framework. This model breaks down the ecosystem into five interconnected pillars: Creator, Collaborator, Channels, Commerce, and Consumer.



The 5Cs of the Creator Economy

C1: Creators

Creators are the cornerstone of the Creator Economy. These individuals generate original content that resonates with a specific audience. Creators range from vloggers and educators to fitness coaches and hobbyists.

For military veterans, the transition into a creator role can be seamless. Take, for instance, the YouTube channels "Monks and Warriors" and "Shivender Kanwar." Both are run by former military personnel who share their experiences, insights, and stories in a way that educates and inspires.

The key to becoming a successful creator lies in identifying your niche. Whether it's sharing lessons in leadership, fitness routines, or survival skills, authenticity and consistency are crucial.

C2: Channels

Channels refer to the platforms where creators distribute their content. These include social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, video-sharing sites like YouTube, and professional networks like LinkedIn. Each channel has its own unique audience and content style, requiring creators to tailor their approach.

For veterans, understanding the nuances of each channel is essential. For example, LinkedIn is ideal for thought leadership and professional insights, while YouTube and Instagram are more suited for storytelling and visual content. The choice of channel should align with the creator's target audience and goals.

C3: Consumer

The Consumer is the ultimate driver of the Creator Economy. Consumers seek content that informs, entertains, or inspires. Unlike traditional media audiences, today's consumers are more interactive, often engaging directly with creators through comments, shares, and direct messages.

Veterans, with their rich experiences and unique perspectives, can build a loyal consumer base by addressing specific needs and interests. Whether it's mentoring aspiring leaders, providing fitness tips, or sharing motivational stories, the potential to create meaningful connections with consumers is immense.

C4: Collaborators

This is a golden opportunity for Collaborators (or brands) to capitalize the most where their ideal audience lies. Brands collaborate with Creators to reach their potential customers that are audiences to the creator content. Collaborators are a vital element of growth in the Creator Economy, they fuel the creator economy through advertisement spends. Partnerships can take various forms, such as co-creating content, endorsing products, or engaging in joint ventures.

For veterans, collaboration might involve teaming up with brands focused on adventure gear, health supplements, or education—areas where their expertise and credibility can add value. Collaborations not only expand reach and revenue but also enhance the depth and diversity of content.

C5: Commerce

In past centuries, wars were waged by nations vying for control over territories and people. Online wars are fought by platforms deploying the smartest people and fighting to build their cult audience and monetize them. Monetization is the lifeblood of the Creator Economy.

Commerce involves converting content and influence into revenue streams. This can be achieved through ad revenue, sponsored content, merchandise sales, online courses, and more. The beauty of the Creator Economy lies in its scalability; creators can start small and gradually expand their income streams.

Veterans have a unique advantage here. Their stories and expertise carry authenticity, which is highly valued by audiences and brands alike. For instance, offering online courses on leadership or creating a line of branded merchandise inspired by military values or creating Newsletters or Podcasts can be lucrative avenues.

Why the Creator Economy is for Everyone

One of the most empowering aspects of the Creator Economy is its inclusivity. There are no barriers to entry; all one needs is a smartphone, internet connection, and a story to tell. This level playing field has enabled creators from diverse backgrounds to achieve remarkable success.

For Indian Army veterans, the Creator Economy offers a unique opportunity to channel their experiences into impactful content. YouTube channels such as @DefenceAspirants_IND, @MonksWarriors, @Maniakmehta, @ShivenderKanwar and many others exemplify how ex-servicemen are successfully leveraging their unique experiences and perspectives to connect with audiences and build thriving online communities. These channels demonstrate the power of storytelling, the importance of authenticity, and the ability to build a strong online presence.

Final Thoughts: A Call to Action

The Creator Economy is not just for influencers and entertainers; it is a space where anyone can thrive, including veterans of the Indian Army. Your discipline, resilience, and leadership are assets that can set you apart in this dynamic landscape. Whether you aspire to share stories, teach skills, or build a community, the possibilities are endless.

Remember, the Creator Economy is a marathon, not a sprint. It requires patience, consistency, and adaptability. Start small, learn continuously, and stay authentic to your values. The world is eager to hear your voice, and the digital age provides the perfect platform to amplify it.

Step into the Creator Economy and redefine what's possible. Your journey could inspire millions and create a legacy that extends far beyond the battlefield.



Maj Ankur Mehra is an SS officer who was commissioned into the regiment of Artillery. A leading voice in the Creator Economy, Ankur draws from two decades of experience architecting partnerships between Media Platforms, Content Creators, Brands and Communities. As a senior leader at Meta, he orchestrated transformative Media Partnerships for Facebook and Instagram across regions spanning India, the Middle East, North America, Asia Pacific-Japan, and Latin America. Earlier, as India Country Manager for Europe's largest YouTube Multi Channel Network (MCN), As a former EdTech founder and Military Veteran, Ankur brings an unconventional lens to the creator landscape.

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Theme Article

Dubai's Hosts 1 Billion Followers Summit 2025: A Beacon for the Future of Content Creation



A Poster of the Summit

The world is changing. The way we consume information, the way we interact with brands, and the way we build communities are all being transformed by the digital age. At the heart of this revolution lies the **content creator**, a new breed of storyteller shaping the narrative of our times. Recognizing this paradigm shift, Dubai hosted the **1 Billion Followers Summit 2025**, a groundbreaking event dedicated to fostering the **content creator economy** and showcasing the city as a global hub for digital innovation.



The Entrance to the Summit

The Genesis of a Movement: Why Content Creation Matters

The 1 Billion Followers Summit wasn't simply a conference; it was a manifestation of a larger movement recognizing the power of content in shaping awareness, culture, and human development. The summit, organized by the UAE Government Media Office, aimed to highlight content's influence on fostering innovation, compassion, and global unity. It brought together over 15,000 content creators and 420 prominent speakers, including influencers and global experts. This unprecedented gathering underscored the growing significance of the content economy, estimated to be worth a staggering \$250 billion globally.

Dubai: A Haven for Digital Pioneers



UAE launched the first ever Creators HQ at Emirates Towers in Dubai as part of the 1 Billion Followers Summit, 2025

Dubai's choice as the venue for this monumental event was no accident. Renowned as a global hub for creativity and entrepreneurship, the city has strategically positioned itself as a leader in fostering digital ecosystems that empower creators and businesses alike.

Here's Why Dubai is a Magnet for Digital Marketers, Influencers, and Creators

- **Thriving Digital Infrastructure:** Dubai boasts a robust digital infrastructure, with high-speed internet connectivity and advanced technological facilities, essential for content creation and distribution.
- **Supportive Government Policies:** The UAE government has implemented forward-looking policies to attract and nurture digital talent, making it easier for creators to establish themselves in the region. This includes initiatives like the "Invest with Creators" Program, providing 50 million AED in funding to support startups and individuals with innovative content ideas.

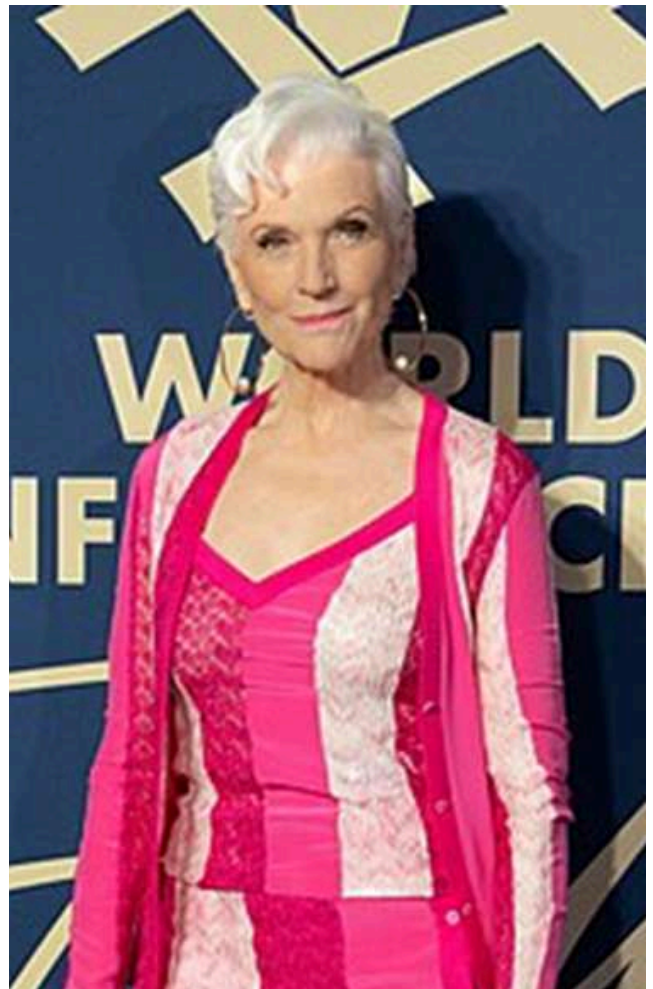
- **Access to a Global Audience:** Dubai's strategic location and cosmopolitan nature provide creators with access to a diverse and global audience, amplifying their reach and impact.
- **Luxury and Lifestyle Hub:** Dubai's reputation as a luxury and lifestyle destination makes it an ideal location for creators in these niches, with abundant opportunities for brand collaborations and partnerships.
- **Strong Influencer Marketing Landscape:** Dubai has a well-established influencer marketing industry, with a high concentration of prominent influencers across various sectors. This provides aspiring creators with a vibrant ecosystem to learn, network, and collaborate.

Inside the Summit: A Confluence of Ideas and Inspiration

The 1 Billion Followers Summit, spanning three days from January 11-13, 2025, offered an immersive experience designed to inspire and empower content creators, businesses, and industry leaders. The event, held at the Emirates Towers, DIFC, and the iconic Museum of the Future, was a melting pot of ideas, innovation, and networking.

Here are some highlights from the summit:

- **World-Class Speakers and Influencers:** Attendees had the opportunity to gain insights from a stellar lineup of global icons. These included :
 - **Maye Musk:** Model, entrepreneur, and mother of Elon Musk.
 - **Naguib Sawiris:** Egyptian billionaire and media mogul.
 - **Ben Relles:** AI expert and strategist.
- **Hands-On Learning from Top Creators:** Interactive workshops and tutorials were conducted by renowned creators like [Zach King](#) and [Germán Garmendia](#), offering practical advice on editing, DIY production, and innovative revenue strategies. VidCon alums Jim Louderback, Rachel Masters, and Leslie Morgan spearheaded the programming tracks on the creator economy, technology, and content development.
- **Interactive Panels and Workshops:** The summit featured over 30 workshops led by global influencers and industry experts. These hands-on sessions covered crucial topics such as monetizing content creatively, building authentic brand collaborations, and promoting sustainability in digital storytelling.



Maye Musk – mother of Elon Musk

- **Networking Opportunities:** The summit provided a unique platform for attendees to connect with over 125 CEOs from global corporations and engage with 15,000 creators, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders.
- **Global Social Media Platforms Unite:** In a landmark moment, major social media platforms like Meta, TikTok, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and Snapchat convened under one roof, showcasing their latest tools and strategies for empowering creators. This collaborative effort underscored the industry's commitment to supporting creators and fostering a healthy digital ecosystem.
- **“Invest with Creators” Program:** This initiative, championed by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai, aimed to fund and mentor startups and individuals with creative and impactful ideas. The program received an impressive 500 applications from 40 countries, highlighting the global reach and appeal of the summit.
- **The \$1 Million Content Creator Award:** A highlight of the summit was the announcement of the five finalists competing for the prestigious \$1 million award, the largest prize ever awarded for meaningful content creation¹¹. These finalists, chosen through public voting that garnered 3.3 million votes from around the globe, represented the diverse and impactful nature of content creation:
 - **Mahmoud Zaiter (Palestine):** Inspiring hope in Gaza and leading humanitarian efforts.
 - **Nasser Al Akeel (Saudi Arabia):** Simplifying complex knowledge through engaging videos.
 - **“Influencers for Lebanon” Initiative:** Helping rebuild communities during crises.
 - **Simon Squibb (UK):** Motivating future leaders and supporting social enterprises.
 - **Samuel Weidenhofer (Australia):** Spreading positivity and hope through creative content

The Advantages of Attending the 1 Billion Followers Summit

The 1 Billion Followers Summit offered attendees a multitude of advantages, making it a must-attend event for anyone invested in the future of content creation:

- **Learning from the Best:** The summit provided a unique opportunity to learn from global leaders in the content creation industry. Attendees gained insights into the latest trends, strategies, and tools to enhance their content creation skills and grow their platforms.
- **Building a Powerful Network:** The summit facilitated networking opportunities with fellow creators, industry experts, CEOs, and investors, fostering collaborations and partnerships that could propel careers forward.
- **Gaining Global Exposure:** The summit's international reach offered attendees a chance to connect with a global audience, expanding their reach and influence beyond their immediate networks.
- **Staying Ahead of the Curve:** The summit showcased the latest innovations in content creation, from AI tools to immersive storytelling techniques using AR/VR. Attendees gained a glimpse into the future of the industry and gained valuable knowledge to stay ahead of the competition.



Five content creators from around the world who were shortlisted for the \$1million prize

- **Investing in Personal Growth:** The summit offered numerous workshops and interactive sessions focused on personal and professional development, empowering attendees to improve their skills, refine their brand, and unlock their creative potential.

A Visionary Event Shaping the Future

The 1 Billion Followers Summit 2025 was more than just an event; it was a statement. It solidified Dubai's position as a global leader in the content economy and showcased the UAE's commitment to fostering innovation, creativity, and meaningful storytelling. The summit, with its groundbreaking collaborations, visionary leadership, and unwavering support for creative talent, served as a beacon for the future of content creation, inspiring a new generation of digital storytellers to use their platforms for positive change.

Written and Compiled By the ForceNet E-Zine Editorial team

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

Leisure

Digital Warriors: Claiming the Frontier [Thru' Electromagnetic Spectrums We Navigate]

Like stealth bombers piercing hostile skies,
Each campaign unfolds with surgical precision -
Digital warriors mapping uncharted domains,
Adapting to battles where rules are unwritten!

In command centres lit by screen-glow,
Strategists parse vast oceans of data streams,
Analytics sweeping like submarine sonar,
Revealing consumer depths with cold accuracy!

Forward scouts - we call them influencers now -
Deploy across platforms with calculated grace.
Their reach more potent than cruise missiles,
Converting attention into digital gold.
Some rise to general rank among their peers,
Commanding million-strong armies of followers -
Words worth more than precision-guided munitions!

From barracks to boardrooms, we adapt.
Thru' night-vision scopes of targeted metrics,



Engagement tracked like heat signatures,
Each click a coordinate on shifting battlefields.
Success measured in conversion rates,
Sharp as sniper rounds hitting distant marks!

This new theatre of operations yields
Fortunes vast as defence budgets.
Entry-level troops earn Commander's pay,
Veteran strategists amass wealth
That rivals military procurement funds.
Digital arsenals built on expertise,
Each campaign driving market dominance.

Like special forces dropped behind lines,
Freelancers chart their own paths,
Their laptops their barracks, their hours
their own.

Unbound by chains of corporate command,
They build their empires, one client at a time,
Forging connections across borders & industries!

Creators, marketers & innovators thrive,
Turning ideas into income streams,
While mastering the art of influence & design.
Adaptable, precise & relentlessly focused,
They shape their futures in this digital age!

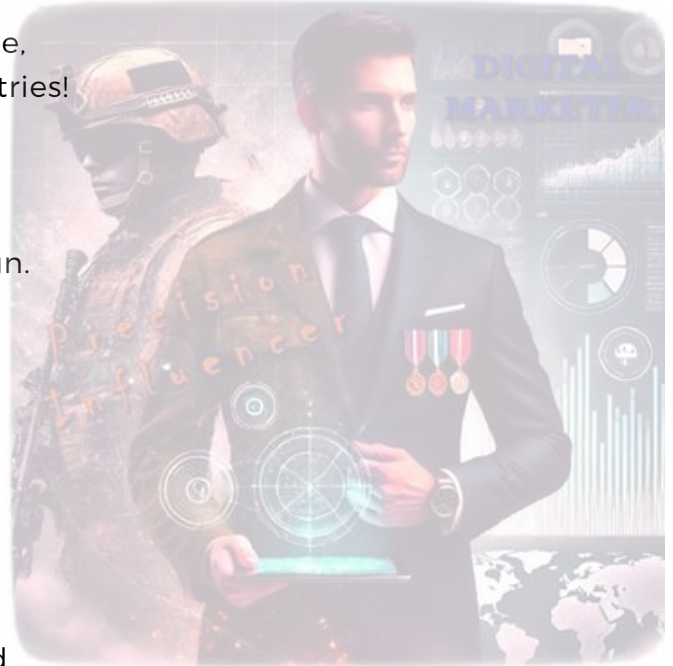
Drone swarms of data paint target profiles,
Satellite networks track consumer paths
Thru' this electromagnetic domain.
We deploy with battlespace awareness
That would make intelligence officers proud,

Each platform a new front to secure!
Our missions span the global theatre,
Unrestricted by borders or time zones,
Free from conventional rules of engagement.

Here, in this digital operations zone,
New empires rise on foundations of code,
Built by veterans of virtual warfare,
Masters of modern combat's silent art!

Veterans of the past, pioneers of the present -
The battlefield evolves, but the mission remains:
Lead with Precision. Adapt with Courage.
Chart the Uncharted. Claim the Digital Frontier!!!

~ **Commander V Srivatsan**
cdr.srivatsan@gmail.com



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Star of Forces Network

A Forces Network Star 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 IQBAL SINGH

Col K Anil Kumar has served just over 20 Years with the Indian Army (1996 - 2017) in an Infantry Regiment, having held multiple appointments in various counter-insurgency operations across varied terrain in India and abroad. He has over 28 years of experience in the field of Security, Operations, Facility Management, Administration and Compliances. Presently with ReNew as the Pan India Head - Security and Administration. He has also worked with DiFACTO Robotics. He is an Ardent biker and have crisscrossed the country with fellow bikers and also plays golf and basketball.



IQ: Please tell us something about your background prior to joining the IMA and the Army, and your subsequent Army career?

Anil: Prior to joining the Army, post XIIth std, I tried my hand at Engineering (electrical) for 2 years. Realised that I was not cut for it and left, joined B Com. In the third year of B Com, I got through CDSE. Trained in IMA and thereafter served across the country in various terrain configuration with an Infantry Battalion. Did all mandatory courses and have a distinction of being an Instructor in all 3 institutes of MHOW (MCTE - RSO, Infantry School - Tac, AWC - JC). Did an Rashtriya Rifle tenure and commanded Assam Rifle. Did one Foreign course (JC in USA) and UN Mission at DR Congo. Post Army, Joined a niche robotic company as Head Corporate Functions and after two years moved to ReNew Power. At ReNew I head the Security & Administration (S&A) vertical with 91 ex-servicemen in the vertical in this company.



IMA with Mektilla Company

IQ: You were an infantry officer, you commanded an infantry battalion. You were doing so well in the Army and then, you take premature retirement. Explain to us that decision of yours. Now, in hindsight what do you think of that decision?

Anil: Decision was based on two facts - being overweight with really little scope to align with army standards and then the hunger to explore the corporate world. Oh one more - I wanted tattoos - I have 3 of them. So ambition drove the decision to quit and make a new beginning.



Commandant 22 AR

IQ: Give us an understanding about your current role and what you are presently engaged in. Also please share in chronological order the roles and companies in your corporate career?

Anil: Current Role - Country Head Security & Administration (S&A), ReNew Power. ReNew is India's largest renewable energy company listed at NASDAQ with its HQ in Gurgaon and operating out of 8 States in India. I joined ReNew as a State S&A Head for Karnataka and got elevated 2 years ago as India Head. I head a team of 91 ex-servicemen in the company. There are 6 Cols, 2 Cpts, 2 Majs, 1 Sqn Ldr and 80 other ranks in leadership role in the company. I got this job from the Forces Network. Also many of the others above have been hired in ReNew from Forces Network.

The chronological order of the companies in corporate is as below:

2017 - 2019: DiFACTO Robotics and Automation Pvt Ltd - Head Corporate Functions

2019 - date: ReNew Pvt Ltd.



IQ: How did you prepare yourself for the Military to Corporate transition? Also include how you prepared for your GMAT while still in military service? Do you think that the MBA has lost its charm over the years now?

Anil: Post Army service, I qualified on CPP, PGD in Business Analytics. I did not do MBA. Doing a course post the vast armed forces experience is not mandatory to land good jobs. It is how one approaches the job market, identifies what is needed and prepares accordingly.

IQ: Veterans and Sales – commonly it is believed that these two do NOT go together? What is your view? Can veterans take up sales roles? How must they prepare for those roles?

Anil: There is not a single job that cannot be done by veterans. Not all veterans can do sales however if one chooses to, one must have thorough knowledge of the product and the flair. Veterans need to learn the tact to succeed in sales.

IQ: You are an infantry officer now working in a renewable energy company. Did you have to learn some technology related subjects? How did you do so? What would your advice be to fellow veterans on this front?

Anil: Right from unit days, I had a lot of liking for technology and its utilisation. In the Infantry school, I taught HHTI, UGS and BFSR in the tac leg. Also RSO gave me a deep insight into the technology world. So when it came to get selected and perform in ReNew, it was imperative for me to dive deep in to the manner solar and wind farms function and the risks in particular. So interacting with the scions in the industry and course mates in other renewable companies helped a lot. So advise would be – study, talk, interact and collaborate with industry leaders – veterans and other wise.

IQ: If you were to Transition from the military to the corporate today with the benefit of all the insights and wisdom that you have gained in the corporate today what would you have done differently?

Anil: I would think that I would have prefer to transition to project management or a tech job. S&A is good but there is limited growth in S&A as there is normally only one Country Head. Thereafter growth stops in that company.

IQ: Any important lessons you learnt while switching jobs and companies in your corporate career? What about the art of graceful exit? Any advice for transitioning military personnel on this front?

Anil: Be very clear the reason one wants to quit. Money cannot and should not be a reason, the role, boss, growth, location, culture should be some of the considerations. Talk to your boss and be humble yet firm during the time one is planning to quit. Need to not bring out shortcomings here or good things of the new company during exit. Finish off all tasks that have been given, taken up and help fully in the transition. Serve the notice period off if there are no other compulsions. Leave with head held high.

IQ: How important is it to understand your own passion and expertise and then to work towards upskilling in that domain so as to have a better innings in the corporate? What are your views on this? How does one identify one's passion?

Anil: With age and experience one should be able to put your finger on your work related passion. Be it crunching numbers, managing projects or even organising security, upskill, innovate and adapt to the business. So basically identify the one passion which allows you to do the above and chase it.



Biking in Balkans – Border of Bosnia and Montenegro

IQ: You have had a long stint in the corporate. To be successful what typical traits from the military must be give up and what must we imbibe?

Anil: Seven + plus in the corporate world. Being hierarchical, rigid, refusing to unlearn must be shed. Being collaborative, ready to learn and work with people half your age, being inclusive, adaptive and have empathy will go a long way to ensure success.

IQ: What message would you like to give to transitioning military officers who wish to make a career in the technology industry in sales roles, especially in a product company?

Anil: Know why one wants to quit (work pressure and bad bosses are here too), what are your aspirations and are they aligned with your skills. Upskill, read, intern while in service or during transition to position oneself for technology and sale roles.

IQ: Tell us about your family including your parents. How did they shape your value system. Also share the role played by your family including spouse in your successful Transition?

Anil: My dad also transitioned from Air Force to the HAL. He made it big at HAL and laid the foundation of my transition. He was supportive at the time I was making this decision and gave me sound advice on the merits and perils of the corporate world.



Pic with my daughter.

IQ: What are your future plans post-retirement from the corporate career?

Anil: Joining a NGO that looks after abandoned parents. I shall start one or invest in an exiting NGO. This is very close to my heart.



Lt Col Iqbal Singh (retd) is an infantry officer who started his career with the Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. He is currently a senior technology executive with Google based at Gurgaon, India. He is firmly of the belief that tech is an enabler and your friend. He is the Founder of Forces Network – the Network of the military veterans in the corporate. He believes that there are no barriers: all the barriers exist only in one's mind. It was with that firm conviction that Iqbal started the now famous ABCT (Any Body Can Tech) Program in Forces Network in 2019. Under this program non-tech officers were taken to cloud certification level. Over 40 participants got certified from Microsoft in cloud computing under this program. He is convinced that military personnel can easily transition to tech roles with some upskilling.

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

ForceNetPreneur

Very few veterans take up entrepreneurship in their post military careers. We at the Forces Network wish to change that by showcasing veteran entrepreneurs who have gone to achieve success in their ventures. 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 veterans taking up entrepreneurship and become job givers rather than job seekers.

IN INTERACTION WITH IQBAL SINGH

Capt Siddharth Singh was commissioned on Mar 2001 from the Officers Training Academy into 8 Garwal Rifles. Post his short service stint with Army he moved on working with ICICI bank handling wealth management and other banking relationships of ultra HNI individuals. Post a 5 years stint with ICICI bank he started a small real estate and construction company, post which his second venture MEHAAII was started. He has also started distributorship of pharma products.



IQ: Please tell us something about your background prior to joining the OTA and the Army, and your subsequent Army career?

Siddharth: I did my initial schooling from Mayo College, Ajmer and St Anne's School, Jodhpur. I am a PG in History and UGC NET Exam qualified. Before joining OTA I was freelancing teaching and preparing for competitive exams.



Standing extreme right

IQ: Share with us your career in the Army. The tenures, the highs and the lows. What is it that you learnt from the Army that helped you in your civilian career?

Siddharth: I was commissioned in March 2001, in Eighth Battalion The Garhwal Rifles. My battalion has a very rich history, awarded battle honour - BUTURDOGRANDI in 1965 and many-many more citations and awards. I was lucky to have served the battalion in OP PARAKRAM soon after commissioning in various parts of J&K and then in OP RAKSHAK in HAFA. As a young Infantry officer, leading men in service of the motherland was and will remain the highest point of my career, not to forget being groomed by many of the finest officers of our army helped my whatever little I have achieved today.



Capt Siddharth Singh a Garhwali Officer

IQ: You began as a corporate employee. Please share in chronological order the roles and companies in your corporate career? How was the experience working in these companies?

Siddharth: I left the army in Dec 2006. I was lucky to have been nominated by DGR to do a 6 months residential course at Indian institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Post the successful competition in October 2007, I was lucky to have numerous offers from the corporate world, but I finally joined the leading ICICI Bank in a newly opened division known as GLOBAL PRIVATE CLIENTS which was to deal in wealth management and other banking relationships of ultra HNI individuals based in Jaipur and taking care of the state of Rajasthan. It was a 5 years plus stint and an ideal launch-pad that one could have asked for. Dealing with HNI clients helped me with valuable insights in entrepreneurship, risk taking and strengthen the man management skill that I had best learnt in my battalion.

In 2012, I left ICICI bank to start a small real estate and construction company MP Construction. Continuing in 2019, I started my venture MEHAII and forayed into furniture manufacturing having my own set up in Jodhpur. We have successfully completed my individual residential, resorts and are working with many reputed interior designers and architects.

In 2021, I started distributorship of pharma products under my own brand MEHAII and today have 9 products in the market and few more are in the pipeline.

We are on FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM also. We do any type of customised wooden furniture , upholstery, leather and rattan (cane). We work in TEAK, SHEESHAM, MANGO and ACACIA wood.

My websiteis www.mehaaii.com and www.mehaaii.in



IQ (right) with Siddharth at his manufacturing unit at Jodhpur

IQ: How did you prepare yourself for the Military to Corporate transition?

Siddharth: The DGR course was extremely helpful and the icing on the cake were the outstanding faculty at IIM-A who trained us for a successful transition. My personal take is that a lot of unlearning also has to take place as the situations and the solutions in army and corporate life are quite different. My journey in Army gave me the conviction and determination to overcome any situation comfortably that came along my life till date.

IQ: You were doing very well as a corporate employee. How did you become an entrepreneur? Please share your journey in detail.

Siddharth: After having worked for 5 years, I realized that now I have the skills to start my own business, I always wanted to carve an own niche in the business world. To start construction work was ideal as it helped me interact with the customer first hand and provide solutions and fulfill his dream of making his home. Also, the requirement of capital was not much to start at a small level which I started from. Furniture was the next thing in construction of houses.

IQ: From being a banker to making furniture- that's quite a shift. Explain to us the rationale or the reasons for this decision?

Siddharth: My stint as a banker and dealing with the ultra HNIs helped me a lot in broadening my horizons and taking risks. Interesting, while working with a client, I recommended furniture also, however, the client took me to his preferred furniture person who mocked me by saying "*fauji kab se furniture banane lag gaye*", that was a cue and in next two months mehaaii.com was born. I find the work very fulfilling as it helps me to customise as per customer needs.

IQ: What are the opportunities in the furniture manufacturing space? What are the roles / business ideas that you would suggest that the veterans can take up?

Siddharth: It's a very challenging task as many agencies are involved right from the wood procurement, to the carpenter, polishing and finally the finishing. More so 75% of working staff are not well educated and it requires you to stand on ground for work. I am sure anyone who likes detailing and has a passion for this must come in.

IQ: Is there a mindset shift required while moving from being an employee to a Business Owner? Can you share the details?

Siddharth: As an officer of our finest army, we are trained and groomed at various roles as we move in service. I feel it doesn't require any specific skill but passion, truthfulness and a desire to carve a niche. As a banker, dealing in portfolio management, I was always true and fair in my advice, my financial skills were acquired in my six months course but they were not enough, but I always ensured the best solutions for my clients which I ensured with the help of my seniors in GPC division. What I mean is we may not know all the things but we must know how to seek help and take advice from who knows it to help the client/customers get the best. **'Customer is the king'** and **"All answers lie in the marketplace"** must never .

be forgotten by anyone who is entering the corporate world from the forces.

IQ: How important is it to understand your own passion and expertise and then decide to venture in that space? What are your views on this? How does one identify one's passion?

Siddharth: Anything that doesn't get you boredom when you do it over and over again is what I call passion. Expertise comes over a period of time and is OK even if one is not a domain expert, if he can engage with an expert to get a solution is enough. It's the customer centric approach that is important just like in army we ensure best for the "men under our command".

IQ: To be a successful large scale furniture manufacturer what typical traits from the military must we give up and what must we retain?

Siddharth: Firstly, one must be clear of the needs of the customer. If we can identify it clearly than secondly, how to put a team together for completing the task from the existing team. Thirdly, is successful compilation and safe delivery till home. We are taught the same in our units and all the army courses, just the audience is changed.



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IQ: What message would you like to give to transitioning military officers who wish to make a career in furniture manufacturing?

Siddharth: I would only request anyone who has passion in detailing, customer centric work and lots and lots of patience must come in this work. The majority of the workforce in this work are from less educated backgrounds, so lots of calmness and patience is required. It's normal to miss a few deadlines in this profession given the mindset of people, so here again the "carrot and stick" policy that we so often use in the army comes into play a lot.

IQ: Tell us about your family including your parents. How did they shape your value system. Also share the role played by your family including spouse in your successful Transition?

Siddharth: My father was a senior civil servant in the Rajasthan government and my mother was a homemaker. My wife Praveena is a Joint Commissioner in Rajasthan Transport Services. My daughter, Mehai Singh is currently pursuing her B Tech (Hons) in Electrical and Electronics engineering from University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.

My wife particularly supported a lot in putting on the drawing board lots of things that I needed on ground with her civil services experience. She is a pillar of my entire journey from the army and then my journey till here. I can in the same breath thank all my commanding officers, seniors and fellow officers who were always motivating me while I was transitioning and till date. Whatever small or big I have achieved till date is only because of my army and my unit 8 GARHWAL RIFLES.



Lt Col Iqbal Singh (retd) is an infantry officer who started his career with the Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. He is currently a senior technology executive with Google based at Gurgaon, India. He is firmly of the belief that tech is an enabler and your friend. He is the Founder of Forces Network – the Network of the military veterans in the corporate. He believes that there are no barriers: all the barriers exist only in one's mind. It was with that firm conviction that Iqbal started the now famous ABCT (Any Body Can Tech) Program in Forces Network in 2019. Under this program non-tech officers were taken to cloud certification level. Over 40 participants got certified from Microsoft in cloud computing under this program. He is convinced that military personnel can easily transition to tech roles with some upskilling.

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

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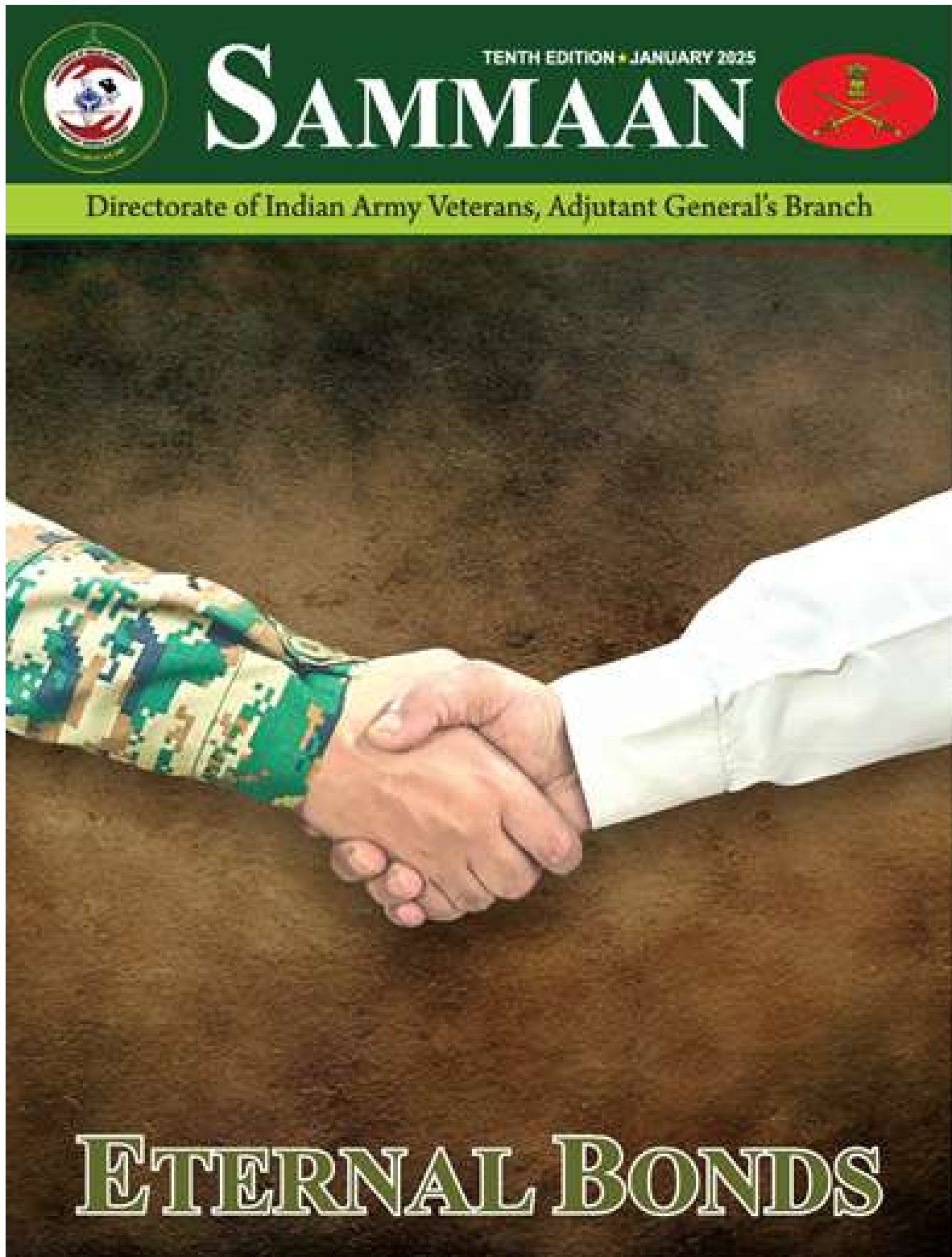
MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

We feature success stories and achievements of our members in this section




Member Achievement

Our Founder Lt Col Iqbal Singh was featured in the DIAV- Directorate of Indian Army Veterans Magazine Sammaan 2025



The snapshots of the article are as below. The full article is reproduced on the next page.



SECTION-IV

Veteran Spotlight: Success Stories & Achievements.

FROM GARHWAL RIFLES TO GOOGLE: THE LONG UNSEEN JOURNEY

Garhwal Rifles to Google



While today, I am mostly feted for my success in my civilian career I must make it known that I joined the Army as an act of calling. I joined the National Defence Academy (NDA) to further my family tradition of serving the nation and the Indian Army. I was the third generation in the Army.

I was commissioned into 4 Garhwal Rifles in Dec 1987. This is where I feel lucky and blessed to have been mentored by some extremely good Commanding Officers and other senior officers. I gave it my all to my career. In most of my courses I had instructor gradings. Post DSSC I had a tenure as a Brigade Major of an Infantry Brigade. It was here that I met with a major career disappointment as regards career progression. I would be lying if I said that it did not hurt, however I decided to take it on the chin and move on.

Sometimes you are not a failure, just in the wrong place! And I Begin Again!

I was unwilling to continue as a straggler in the army for the rest of my service. My story was not unique or rare, but I wanted to be part of a solution. I did not wish to be a former anybody but wanted to look ahead. It

was decided that I must start my second career. I started preparing for the same, the very next day as I had 5 years to go before completing 20 years of service. I made good use of my time and was well prepared for the IT industry armed with several industry certifications and qualifications.

I joined my first corporate job at Hyderabad at Satyam Computers in July 2008. The day I got the Satyam employee badge I truly felt at the top of the world. I felt I was reborn! I was Alive Again!!

My Career in the Technology Industry

After Satyam Computers at Hyderabad I joined Nokia at the NCR in 2009. This was a telecom company. 2G was the prevalent technology. I knew absolutely nothing about it. Soon I had to learn 3G, 4G and 5G technologies. Continuous learning was the name of the game in the technology industry I had quickly learnt this and made learning a hygiene habit. After this I started learning about cloud computing in 2016 the next tech boom.

As they say future belongs to those who prepare for it. My cloud computing upskilling and experience helped me bag my next role at Google. Joining Google is a dream for anyone. Google has a very high bar for selection only 0.5% people typically make it through the gruelling selection process. It gave me an immense sense of satisfaction that I could land a role at Google despite having started as a foot slogging infantry officer. What is even more humbling is that the inspiration that this gave to so many veterans and even others. It made me feel prouder that I could show a pathway to others. This achievement was noticed by

Naukri.com and they interviewed me for a Podcast.



On the Naukri.com Podcast

Lessons Learnt

- **Your Future Self is a Choice:** While there maybe stereotypes working against you however you need to believe in yourself. If you do not believe in yourself no one else will.
- **Technology Industry:** Though financially rewarding it is at the same time also very demanding. The dynamic nature of the industry dictates continuous learning lest you run the risk of becoming redundant very soon
- **Know What You Don't Know:** While most of us know what we know quite well, the same cannot be said about our blind spots. Have a plan to cover your blind spots.
- **Future Belongs to Those Who Prepare for it:** Anticipate and adapt to change, and not just react to trends as they happen.
- **Action Creates Inspiration:** Most people plan too much, procrastinate, wait for the perfect time to start – consequently they are never able to start. "Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can". Having started you earn momentum and that drives you.
- **Be Humble:** It is important to stay humble and

grounded. Staying humble helps and makes you more acceptable amongst your colleagues.

- **Pay Back to the Universe:** Success can never be long lasting if you only think in terms of I, me& myself. One needs to pay back to the universe. It will come back to you.

Conclusion

Each one of us possesses unlimited potential. The limitations we perceive are often self-imposed, stemming from an imagination deficit rather than a lack of talent. We have the power to become anything we desire. It's not our inherent abilities that hinder us; it's the belief in our limitations that holds us back. Remember "What you seek is seeking you."

There are numerous examples of individuals who have successfully transitioned from military to civilian careers very successfully demonstrating that with the right mindset and willingness to learn, anyone can achieve success in a new field. Their stories are testaments to the power of imagination and self-belief in overcoming perceived limitations. You too can be one of them.

About the Author

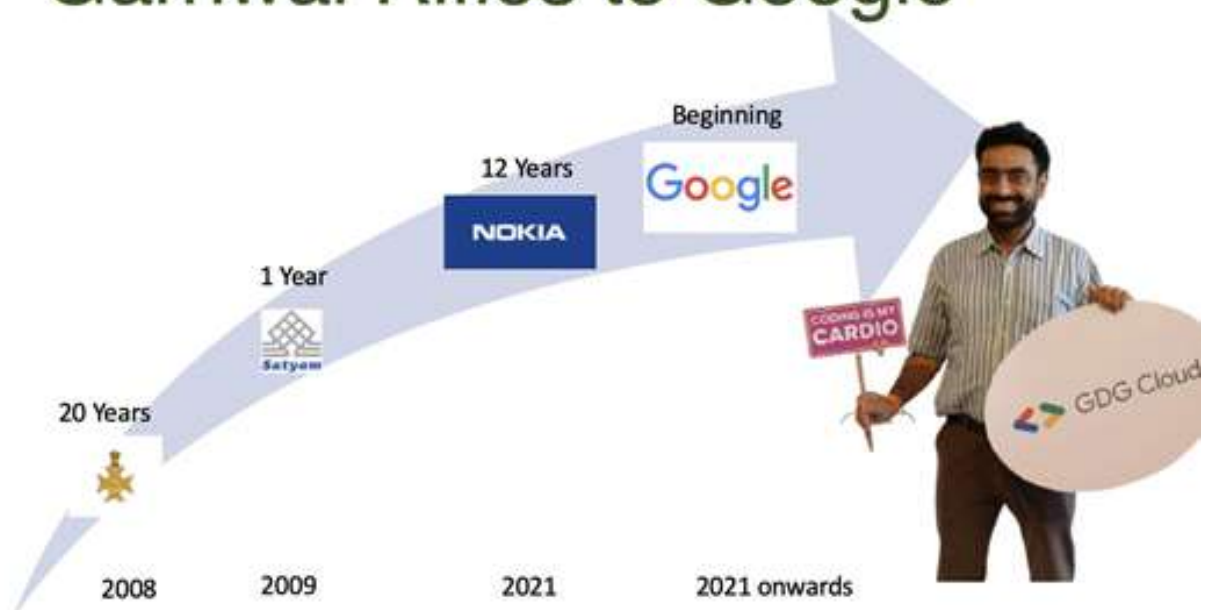


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From Garhwal Rifles to Google: The Long Unseen Journey

By
Lt Col Iqbal Singh (veteran)

Garhwal Rifles to Google



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Lt Col Iqbal Singh (retd) is an infantry officer commissioned in Dec 1987. He has been a BM and GSO-1 at WARDEC. He is now working with Google based at Gurgaon. Iqbal took premature retirement from the Indian Army in 2008. He has in the past worked with Satyam Computers at Hyderabad and Nokia at Noida. He is one of the many successful veterans in the corporate to whom many veterans look up to for inspiration and mentoring. He is fond of public speaking, writing and training a loves to share his knowledge with others. He has mentored hundreds of military officers in their transition journey into the corporate world.



Member Achievement

From the Skies to the Stage: The Journey of a Missile Woman, Corporate Leader, and Queen

BY PALLAVI THAKUR SEN

Transitioning from a career in the armed forces to corporate leadership is no small feat, but what happens when you add a crown to the mix? My journey from being a retired Air Force officer trained in air defence systems to a senior management role in a leading real estate company and a beauty pageant winner has been a remarkable adventure. It's a story of resilience, adaptability, and the pursuit of breaking stereotypes, showcasing that women can excel in multiple dimensions without limiting themselves to societal norms.

This is my story of soaring high in the skies of ambition, grounding myself in corporate responsibility, and stepping onto the stage of empowerment.



Sqn Ldr Pallavi as a Beauty Queen

From the Indian Air Force to the Corporate World

Joining the Indian Air Force was a dream come true. For ten years, I served my nation as an officer, specializing in air defence systems, particularly missile technology. This role required not just technical expertise but also leadership, teamwork, and the ability to make decisions under pressure.

During my tenure, I held various positions, such as Tech Flight Commander, Senior Technical Officer, and Executive Director of an Air Force School. Each of these roles taught me invaluable lessons about managing people, operations, and resources. These lessons became the foundation of my transition into the corporate world.



Pallavi in her corporate role

After retiring, I joined Godrej Properties as a Senior Manager. The shift was challenging, as corporate dynamics differ significantly from the structured environment of the armed forces. However, the discipline, adaptability, and problem-solving skills honed in my military career helped me navigate this transition successfully. From understanding market dynamics to leading projects, I found myself thriving in an environment that was as demanding as my previous role, albeit in a different way.

The corporate world also gave me a platform to explore my leadership abilities in new domains, such as real estate development, project management, and team building. It was a phase of unlearning and relearning—a constant evolution of skills and mindset.

While I was making strides in my corporate career, a thought lingered in my mind: How could I inspire women to break free from stereotypes and embrace their multifaceted identities? This led me to explore an entirely new vertical—beauty pageants.

A Journey into Beauty and Empowerment

Competing in the Mrs. India, Queen of the Nation pageant was not about vanity or superficial beauty for me. It was about redefining what beauty means. My primary goal was to showcase that beauty transcends external appearances. It encompasses intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

Entering the pageant was daunting. I had to compete with women from diverse backgrounds, each bringing their unique stories and strengths. My strategy was not just to focus on looking beautiful but on excelling in every round. Whether it was the talent segment, Q&A rounds, or the personality tests, I aimed to bring my authentic self to the forefront.

Winning the title was a moment of immense pride, not just for me but for every woman who has ever doubted her worth. It was a testament to the fact that beauty lies in confidence, courage, and character. Through this platform, I wanted to send a message: Every girl is beautiful, not because of how she looks but because of who she is.



Winner : Miss India Queen of the Nation winner (Season 4)

Breaking Stereotypes and Changing Horizons

Throughout my journey, one common thread has been my desire to challenge stereotypes. As a woman in the armed forces, I broke the mold of traditional gender roles, proving that women can excel in technical and leadership positions traditionally dominated by men.

In the corporate world, I continue to advocate for women in leadership roles. It's crucial to create an environment where women feel empowered to take on challenges and make significant contributions.

Through the beauty pageant, I shattered the misconception that intellectual and professional women cannot embrace their femininity or excel in domains like fashion and beauty. The pageant allowed me to explore my femininity in a way that complemented my professional and personal identity.



Embracing the femininity, complementing the professional and personal identity

Lessons Learned Along the Way

- **Adaptability is Key:** Transitioning from defence to corporate to the beauty industry required me to adapt to different environments and expectations. Each phase taught me something new, adding to my growth as an individual.
- **Confidence is Beautiful:** True beauty lies in self-assurance. Whether I was commanding a convoy, managing a real estate project, or walking the ramp, confidence was my greatest asset.
- **Empowerment is a Shared Responsibility:** Women supporting women can create an incredible ripple effect. Be it in the armed forces, the boardroom, or a beauty pageant, I have always believed in lifting others as I climb.
- **Growth is Multifaceted:** Personal and professional growth are not mutually exclusive. Exploring diverse interests like dance, music, sports, and pageantry has enriched my life and broadened my horizons.

Inspiring the Next Generation

As a motivational speaker and life coach, I now use my experiences to inspire others. My message to women is simple: Do not let anyone define your limits. You can wear many hats—a soldier, a corporate leader, a mother, a dancer, a queen—and excel in all of them.

I also advocate for better opportunities and support systems for women transitioning from defence to civilian roles. During my journey, I encountered challenges, such as inadequate accommodation and limited understanding of the unique needs of women veterans. Addressing these issues is vital for creating a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Looking Ahead

Winning the title of Mrs. India, Queen of the Nation was not the end of my journey but the beginning of a new chapter. It has given me a platform to reach a wider audience and promote causes close to my heart, such as women's empowerment, education, and personal growth.

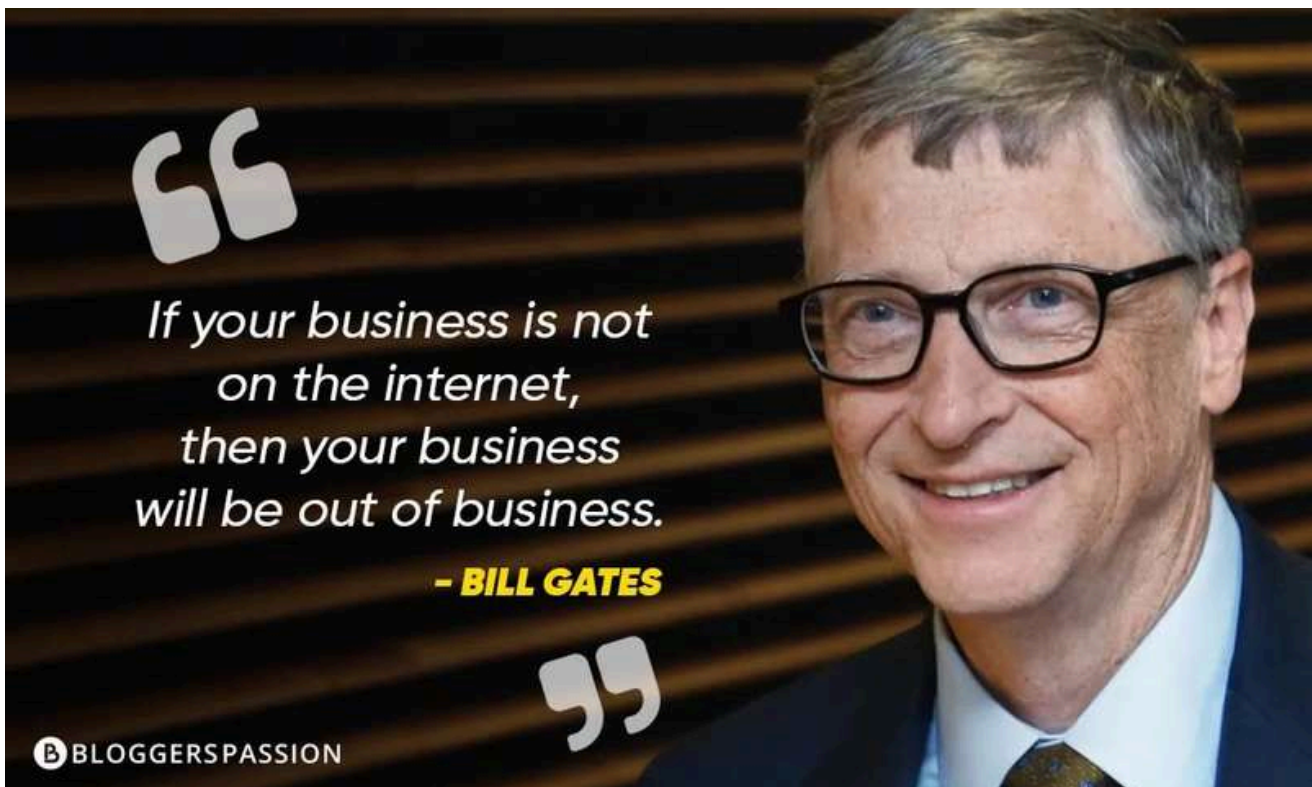
As I continue to navigate my corporate career, explore creative pursuits, and contribute to society, I carry with me the lessons from each phase of my life. From the disciplined corridors of the Air Force to the dynamic world of real estate and the glittering stage of a beauty pageant, my journey is a testament to the limitless potential of women.

To every girl and woman reading this, remember: You are beautiful, powerful, and capable of achieving anything you set your mind to. The sky is not the limit; it's just the beginning.

This journey of mine is not just about personal achievements. It's about breaking barriers, redefining beauty, and inspiring others to embrace their unique paths. Because at the end of the day, true success lies in living a life that inspires others to dream bigger and achieve more.



***Sqn Ldr Pallavi Thakur Sen (Retd.)** is a former Indian Air Force officer, corporate leader, and Mrs. India title holder, dedicated to breaking stereotypes and empowering women. She inspires others through her diverse journey, from air defence systems to real estate leadership and the stage of a beauty pageant.*





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Member Achievement

A SOLDIER MARCHES INTO THE CORPORATE WORLD

BY KRISHNARAJ

Brig Krishna raj is an Officer who took early release after commanding two Operational Brigades and then joined the corporate. He is now a Vice President in an MNC with eight years of corporate experience in fields like Builders Real Estate, NGO, Sports Complexes management, Shipping and Port Business, Soft and Hard flooring business and Textiles. The article is about his journey, the adventurous time in Army, the days of heady flying, the Operations in Kargil etc to get the ball rolling. The article then moves on to Krish in Civvies, something all military men have to slip into, how so ever the Olive greens tend to lurk under your skin...

The pride in Uniform

I am from the services background; my father was an Ammunition Technical Officer and later an EDP specialist in the AOC. He served for 35 years before hanging up his boots. Now he resides in a lovely cottage in the lush green surrounds in hinterland Kerala.



Col ad Mrs B Nambiar and their residence in Kerala.

Childhood Thrills : Fauji Style

Smiling Buddha. During 1974 young Krish woke up to some disturbance in the woods near the Basha. The huts called Bashas as you know, are temporary home made of Mud and Logs in Jammu field area for families. A Wargame in was on in the backyards of Sunderbani in Akhnur. It was the day after the Buddha Smiled in 1974. All around one could hear trenches being frantically dug, there was a hushed talk of imminent attack by Pak forces and all that. Slowly in two days it died down, the troops went back to tents in a week. All was back to normal. For a fauji Brat it is second nature to live through this.

As children we grew up in an army cantonment across the country. We knew it all; Valises, DMS, OG, Jerrycan, Bin Linen Soil, and the famous Jacket known as Serge B.D. As I grew up in the Akhnoor/ Jammu and Delhi areas I was taken in by the disciplined life and set piece army Tarteeb. With a burning desire to join the NDA, the exams and S.S.B was cleared in due course, my dream was soon fulfilled, I joined the NDA at the age of sixteen thereabouts.



Left : III Termer Torchie in NDA in 1985, Right : At Com's Tea for Distinguished Cadets

Some trends in Academy are infectious and one of them was Labels on the satchel. While in the NDA display of Air OP wing on my NDA satchel with "FLY ARMY" proudly flashed by the fifth Term, set the tone for the next five years. I was aware of the Air OP option and I opted to and joined the Regiment of Artillery. A few DS from the Arty also did shape the GC's thought flow but the privileges of 'Always a Vehicle under your seat and a tent on your nut' was pluck-able 'Cherry' for us to gravitate towards the artillery as a choice.

I joined a fine Indian Artillery Regiment and was promptly in 'enjoy' mode. Saahab bahadur had his share of goof ups with his personal weapon and was running all over the cross country routes. While the weapon was soon located it was a wake-up call for life. It set me on a path of care and professional focus. YO's Course was the primary

step into Artillery. Having been groomed well in the Parent Unit by an ever demanding Battery commander, Maj Srinivasan Amudhan, I was able to attain the 'Silver Gun', standing first in the Order of Merit among the Artillery young officers.



2/Lt Krishna Raj , Silver Gun, summer of 1989

Soon the long cherished dream of Flying came calling. After the basic professional stint in the Regiment, the OP officer Capt Krish opted for aviation, cleared by CO with lot of hiccups, I reached the AFA at Dundigal and sported the coveted Blue Flying Overalls. In the Air force academy flying fixed wings was very thrilling with all aerobatics- time passed swiftly. In 1992, moving to Helicopters for specialized training in we, the Army Fledglings earned our wings as army aviation pilots in Nov 1992.



Successfully clearing Flying courses with Air force Academies as an army aviator I had extensive operational tenures in the Arunachal, Nagaland and Ladakh including Siachen Glacier. I flew for 1500 hours of operational flying.



From Dinjan, Assam to the Base Camp in Siachen Glacier, Capt. Krishna raj at Base Camp 1998. 1500 hours of Operational flying.

From Green dense Valley to whiteout conditions, in Uniform, the adventure quotient in 'Flying' is always high. I flew for more than ten years and 1500 hours which was mostly operational in Assam Arunachal and Nagaland, followed by a Leh – Siachen stint. It's an eerie feeling to fly in a white out condition, its like being inside a Ping Pong Ball. Relying purely on the Artificial horizon indicator flying in Glacier is a truly life changing experience.

Later in the year June 1999 I had the good fortune to be a part of OP VIJAY at Kargil/Drass where we saw action. As a morale builder Bollywood came calling, Javed Akhtar, Vinod Khanna and Salman sat with us in our Drass Helipad Bunker on our Bunks and we had a healthy banter like course-mates...those were heady days.

In the year 2k, after completing DSSC at wellington, I returned to the Unit and was deployed for OP Parakram in Dera Baba Nanak 2001. The Battery Commander role in a sensitive enclave was a challenging role at the border.



On the cover of INDIA TODAY July 1999. Post Kargil War



Left :OP PARAKRAM : The regimental team in OP Parakram Maj Krishna raj Standing Far right. Deployed in Punjab in 2001- 2002

Right : Counter Terrorism Operations Lt Col Krishna raj

I was back in my parent unit and promptly in Operation after the Parliament attack. While in the mud banks of khode-beth, I got a selection for a UN mission and qualified to go abroad to Lebanon. The international peace keeping mission was a great opportunity to interact with armies from across the World.



Un Force Commander Pinning the UN Medal on Maj Krishna raj, Aviation Ops Officer UNIFIL Lebanon, 2003.

Then Again I was back to Unit in counter terrorism Ops in Kashmir for a short stint. The Wustervan Ridge to Tral area was a hotbed of action in 2003-2004. The Regiment received Unit Citation for superior performance in this role.



CT Ops: The Team with CO in counter terrorism Operations. Col Ravi Prasad later went on to become Director General of Artillery.

MS branch then decided to send me to Grade One Staff. In 2004 I was appointed to the role of G1 operations in a mountain division in the Eastern Sector which was an extremely salubrious climate and professionally great opportunity to come face to face with large scale planning. A stint on the Chinese border is a different kettle of fish, the Border meetings, the Ceremony, the India China Volleyball match at the LAC was all fantastic stuff.

Two years of tough staff work in a sensitive division and life moved on. In due course I got approved for Col and had the good fortune of commanding my own unit to which I got commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant. Three years down the line, due to the valiant efforts of the troops in CT, my Unit was awarded the Unit Citation in NC - I received the award along with my SM from Lt Gen H S Panag.

Fortunately after successful command I was selected for instructor role in Army War College Mhow in The Senior Command Wing 2009; guiding future Commanding Officers. This was a watershed in my career and had great portends for future. It was a great exposure that one had with officers from friendly foreign countries. Also; our own young soon-to be COs; budding Lieutenant Colonels who were tipped to assume command. Taking them through the discussions and moderating the discussions through operations, tactics, administration and legal subjects gave a window of insight to the world beyond the Uniform.

While at MHOW, I was the contact Instructor with IIM Indore. With Indian Institute of Management Indore as the Basic DS for SC wing IIM capsules, we held DM decision making capsules. This exposure was a catalyst and I decided to prepare for my civil life.

Right there I took up a PG Diploma in Human resource management from Devi Ahilya University at Indore; that was my first step towards empowerment, creating a window to gaze into the civvy-street. As the editor of the SC wing weekly, following up close, I also did an M. Phil in Geo-politics from Punjab University in 2012; two civil qualification were under my belt quite early. After senior command wing tenure, one was posted to NC as Col Aviation, back to flying after 12 years.



Back in Flying Overalls, as a Col Aviation the tenure was eventful and rich in military reach. Ever enthused with the life across, one started off with DGCA exams and cleared the Pilot qualification exams, started flying too. A life of Corporate flying beckoned distantly.

Destiny had other plans; While I was clearing my Commercial Heli Pilot License CHPL, for commercial flying, I got approved for a Brigadier, for now taking the flying profession became far pavilions again.

Then subsequently I commanded two operational Brigades. While in service I took up LLB, UGC NET and HR qualifications. I had the opportunity to participate in seminars and, wrote articles in Editorials for the Hyderabad Newspapers on contemporary Geopolitical issues. I also started my PhD studies in Punjab. The PhD research is in the field related to Geopolitics, It is ongoing due to Corporate work responsibilities.



Brigadier-ship propelled me to the higher decision making role, but then the focus remained; it was a race against time. I pursued LLB (General Law) in 2014 on the side lines. To avail a chance in education field, I also tried my hand at UGC NET exam in 2017 and I cleared that too. The challenge of going out into corporate zone was always nudging me and in 2017, I took up the challenge after successfully commanding two brigades. I finally put up my papers in July 2017 and took Early Release from the Army, moved out into the civil life.



Post Retirement Hobby- *Fabricating a few Pristine 12 Pdr Napoleonic Cannons models from Molded Resin-Fiber and brass Barrels. In the Pic Brig KR is Posing with younger brother Col Deepak Nambiar.*

Out Of Uniform

The run up to this senior level was a Mixed bag. Eight years back, when I left the services, I did undergo a bit of indecision as to what to pick up, whether to follow education line or the real estate line or any other line. There were four offers on my plate; it seemed rosy.

In the Corporate sector for past many years, I have been briefly in Real estate, seriously into an NGOs, and later into Shipping and Textile zones. At present in the Textile/ flooring industry, I am fulfilling the role of Vice president.

Corporate Roles and Exposures

So as luck would have it, I did have certain ups and downs in the first few months, took up a voluntary stint in a real estate firm near my home town, but soon I realized that the options are better in more industrial areas. I was also called by a group of Colleges as Campus Director, but the employer dilly dallied on the salary, then interestingly, I was offered a part business option by someone known to me.

I did some three months research in Agri business. This was good, I had to put in about 10% of the Capital (50% of my retirement benefit) and get 20% of Profit after 4 years.. It seemed inviting as I was to be a 20% partner in four years, and an employee till then. It was a Rice bran oil plant set up. When I realized the fine print it dawned to me that with another acquaintance, I was to work the set up in a remote area, do the business math and decide on sale or withhold tons of Rice Bran oil etc.

The venture was offered in good faith from a friend, but unsuited for a Fauji if one doesn't have deep pockets. Beware ! Howsoever lucrative, deep businesses are not the zone for transiting faujis in green-field areas. In case if the firm didn't take off my 50% corpus would also be in jeopardy. The two trysts cleared the fog of Job markets.

Now, I was losing time.

Within four months I settled down and took up the first appointment as a senior most employee in an NGO, which was also running a golf course alongside, along with other sports facilities and encouragement for the children of the city. The Golf Club was an eye opener an exposure to the kind of financial muscle that runs the civics and the Society. The top politicians, Police and Administrative services, all seemed to be there. The Golfing start was well begun. While I made many friends in the civil zone, the larger options also came clearer. The joining fees of a Golf Club in the Civvy Street will sweep you off your feet. There is a different world out there.

At the NGO one got to know how to get a society put together, the Societies Registration act 1860 and rules came in as a deep understanding to the civil world. Today people are reaching out to me on how to start a Golf Club as a contributory organization, what support can the society so registered seek from the Govt admin etc. On the sidelines I also saw how even a Social leader the director or the president of the society would handle the junior most employee in the Club with decency and due regard. People beneath you may be financially a bit unfortunate but each one has something of value to teach another human being. If there is mutual respect there will be greater contribution from the subordinates that builds synergy.

In the civvy street you have a mixed bag of staff. To get them all together to work as a team was my first learning. I never saw any senior, however senior and high place in the society he may be, talk in a demeaning fashion to a junior employee. And to a man in uniform that comes by a measure of hard earned experience.

Those with military minded strictness or harshly spoken of nature often found the juniors simply leaving the space on some pretext or the other. The first lesson was to first hold your demeanor, keep your poise, how so ever bad the situation may be, learn to respond methodically, safely in a measured manner and not to fly off the handle. At the same time to go into details to unearth what is wrong behind the scenes is equally required when you are in charge of things.

Slowly I was getting better at corporate...

After fulfilling the role for two years as GM and much the wiser, as an opportunity or two came knocking at my door, the Port in South of Pondicherry was beckoning me with a VP Admin role. The options came to me out of the blue as somebody was looking for a senior colonel and not averse to having a Brigadier on their role as the head of the port for other than stevedoring ops. By now I was crossing 52, and an experienced corporate Man.

Pondicherry: The Port of Call

In 2019 I took up was a position of vice president administration at a port in South India near Pondicherry. This scope of work was much larger than the previous assignment. So it was partly a bit of providence also a vindication of my work experience that I was able to back this role. The profile -"Husbanding the Port Operations" was the mandate; it's a wide canvas on the vast Sea side zone.

I was selected as the vice president in the port facility and I served there through a good long stint. In due course of that time the PORT faced two cyclones in 2020-21 which had hit the Tamil Nadu Andhra coast which all of us must have heard. The two cyclones including the formidable cyclone NIVAR were devastating. During the cyclone I was very much present in the port controlling the recovery teams and ensuring minimum loss of property and life in the forefront as to say. The board member spoke to me during the cyclone peak, I had set up a war room in the Port- they were convinced!

Courage in Danger is Half the Battle Won

This Cyclone response and relief went down very well with the board of directors and I was publicly honored by the board of directors in a written statement issued in the next board meeting. This virtue of the service officer where we learned to do our duty in face of all odds helped me tremendously while I was in the port and when the going gets tough you can prove yourself no end; at the edge of the sea.

Managing the port As a Vice President Admin was a gargantuan Task but with stevedoring being handled by a Merchant Navy Captain things went smooth. One made a lot of friends in the Shipping zone. When attending High level meetings with Ministers and dignitaries at the Pondicherry State headquarters it had always been very educative tenure.



VP admin on a Channel Inspection of Buoys : The Port handled huge Panamax vessels of 90000 Tons displacement with eighteen meters draft.



Farewell at the Port - Sep 2021.

Onward to Hyderabad

While in the port I had two interview calls from Hyderabad. Six months apart. In 2021 this call came again and I took the opportunity. I joined the MNC in Hyderabad, which is into textiles. After the Real estate, NGO and shipping zone, Textiles was a wonderful change, spinning a yarn could be interesting. During my selection interview or interaction as they call it nowadays they also took care to speak to my previous employer and my boss who was the honorary secretary and president of the NGO and Golf Club who had something very good to speak about me and they were reassured. They also wanted to speak with my Military Boss who was now a Retd Army Commander, he gave me a Thumbs Up!! The HR was satisfied...



Textile as we all would know or many of us may not know that it is the manpower intensive third largest manufacturing industry in India. There is great number of textile engineers specifically doing this vertical which I in my studies zone I was not so aware in the disciplines of engineering B.Tech courses. So I am here now. The role that I have fulfilled, I have already brought out about.



Left - RD Parade at Company 2022 ; Right Birthday celebrations at the Company

It is a large role, senior appointment with a few general managers under me so to say. I have more than 170 employees and large area of responsibility including sensitive ones, central services ones, fire safety ones as well as liaison with local police authorities and the administration. So it is like running a small Township as the head administrator answerable to the director who is the head of the complete MNC outlet in the city.



Patriotic Fervour: Republic Day Parade in Corporate and Prize distribution

After seven years in the corporate, presently I am holding the position of Vice-President Central services, at a Multi-national Corporation. All other than Production and Engineering Support falls in this Zone. In corporate, Vice President is a senior level position which has got vast amount of responsibilities. In the corporate, professionals take around 25 years of committed effort to reach a VP level.



Team Building : Reception Protocols at ceremonial event 2025

Prepare yourself for the Military to Corporate transition

In a way I was more or less prepared to move out, but why and how is a difficult question to answer. Why I took the field that I have is also a gut feeling move. I had gone on to Naukri profile earlier and tried to make a profile for myself. That was about five years back where I found that of the 55 industries that were there as a choice, other than “law and Order” and administration, there was not much of a choice that I was adept at.

Be it shipping, be it Cement, be it Iron and Steel, be it Textiles, be it Metals, be it the accounting, be it compliance law, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Of the 55 specializations I nearly had none. So as I mentioned, I did my HR and LLB General law to begin with. Now comes as to how I leaned on towards admin- in a way it came naturally and once I got into the experiences that I mentioned earlier.

I realized admin is probably not just the admin that we think of from the uniform zones. Admin is a was too much wider zone like that what civil Administrative /IAS officers deal with in their area of work. Security and Admin are the Core support of any Industry.

It is somewhat on those lines when you manage a Township administrative requirement, central services, security, catering, and gardens horticulture. It is like running a small town municipality by itself. So the decision and therefore once you could make out that my core competence will be in a more broad based broad spectrum familiarity field, it was by and large clear that an administrative zone which had larger scope in a larger company would probably be my best bet. This does not come simply and these job opportunities are also very rare.



The corporate need leaders too.

They need someone who can handle it all and do it with a commitment. Also someone with a larger perspective on events and protocols – all you need to prove is that you are a balanced person with no eccentricity.

You might find head security at some place, you might find head of facilities at some place, but you will not find all these together in many cases because admin seems to be the last rung where the corporates put their money. At the same time, the corporates in large fields such as Textiles and other manufacturing corporates in large B to B businesses need much more paraphernalia and compliances and audit requirements to be fulfilled to run their business.



Brig Krishna raj (Retd) being Felicitated by the CEO Hyderabad, 15 Aug 2022

And here is where the acumen of service officers of handling diverse manpower of handling administrative issues of handling security issues of handling disaster management and what have you. Everything comes to the fore and quick logical decision making skill stand by you at that time. Thus administration seem to be a natural flow of the direction that one could take.

I also had the option of taking up HR. So I had done PG diploma in HR from Devi Ahilya University. I also had done Law as a full LLB course from Osmania University. As I was a keen reader, I could start up as a registrar in any university complex which is so many budding in the country, I passed UGC NET which is a competitive exam while during my second Brigade command. So one has prepared in some form or the other to face the challenges and to some extent I could say that I was reasonably empowered as far as the qualifications go, to take a step outside uniform.

What to Imbibe ; What to let go

In the corporate you become a quick learner as the norms are clear. If you do not make the cut, they are not going to carry baggage. Perform or Perish.



Republic Day Function at Plant Location. Brig Krishna raj Retd, Seated in centre with the Director.



*Left : Vice President Admin, Brig Krishna Raj giving away prizes on the Republic Day 2024.
Right : Coordinating the Annual Day with the team at Hyderabad. Jan 2024*

A soldier comes with certain signature traits that tells him apart - some of these traits you keep and Cherish some you discard along the journey and some you give up with some bit of nostalgia. One realizes that time is premium and no one has inclination for your suspense thriller "when I was the Commander in the Telephonic Battle..." draw!... Well that's on a lighter note- No pun intended!

<p>CHERISH...</p>	<p>LET GO....</p>
<p>Punctuality... Though your singularity will bug you – Be there. Persistence pays. There would be many who silently envy this ability and slowly you will make your indelible mark.</p>	<p>KOI HAI !! Give up the Call bell. It's a Do It Yourself World out there. You Make your PPT, your Excel Sheets, your Summaries (A G2/ GSO 1 Ops tenure would have certainly helped) and also you learn the clarity and Brevity principles very Fast.</p>
<p>Eye for Detail. You need that to get to the root of the problem. One can't delegate this if you want a true solution. The company relies on such people who go into details and come up with lasting solutions.</p>	<p>"It's Below my Dignity..." I have seen CEO pick up discarded cans and putting it into a nearby Bin.. It's a silent message and clear one at that.</p>
<p>ROKO TOKO. In the realm of Occupational safety, any safety violation if immediately stopped can avert a disaster. Many practically walk on regardless. Meanwhile it makes sense to get that "stop Work" authority at the start itself from CEO.</p>	<p>Collective admonition doesn't help. Praise in Public, Counsel in Private. Do remember to keep the intervening manager or reviewer in picture. It's safer always to record a negative remark if you are placed high enough.</p>
<p>In the Land of The Lama Don't be a GAMA. Every company has its OB. Learn the Organizational Behavior and then act accordingly. You will be recognized as a genuine man immediately. Remember – They, most of them with twenty plus years behind them have seen many Faujis in their midst, and they compare..</p>	<p>OP Order Syndrome- to be avoided. Include all stake holders when you plan to enunciate some departmental directives. Look up the institutional memories. Remember, Policies are made at the highest levels and your directives need to be in sync and not opposed.</p>
<p>Taking charge of the situation. It's a basic leadership trait that is woefully short in the corporate. Many of the managers have started their journey as Graduate Engineer trainees and they don't have independent leadership opportunities like our captains and flying officer Pilots. For the Officer it's a trait that needs to be fostered in corporate. It will take you places- Remember the Port Cyclone episode...</p>	<p>Moral Lecture. Not many out there have the time, that kind of free time. If one has the free time to impart an ML, then YOU too are probably missing out on something important. Be an action man, give a piece of your mind and move on. Your subordinates will get the message.</p>

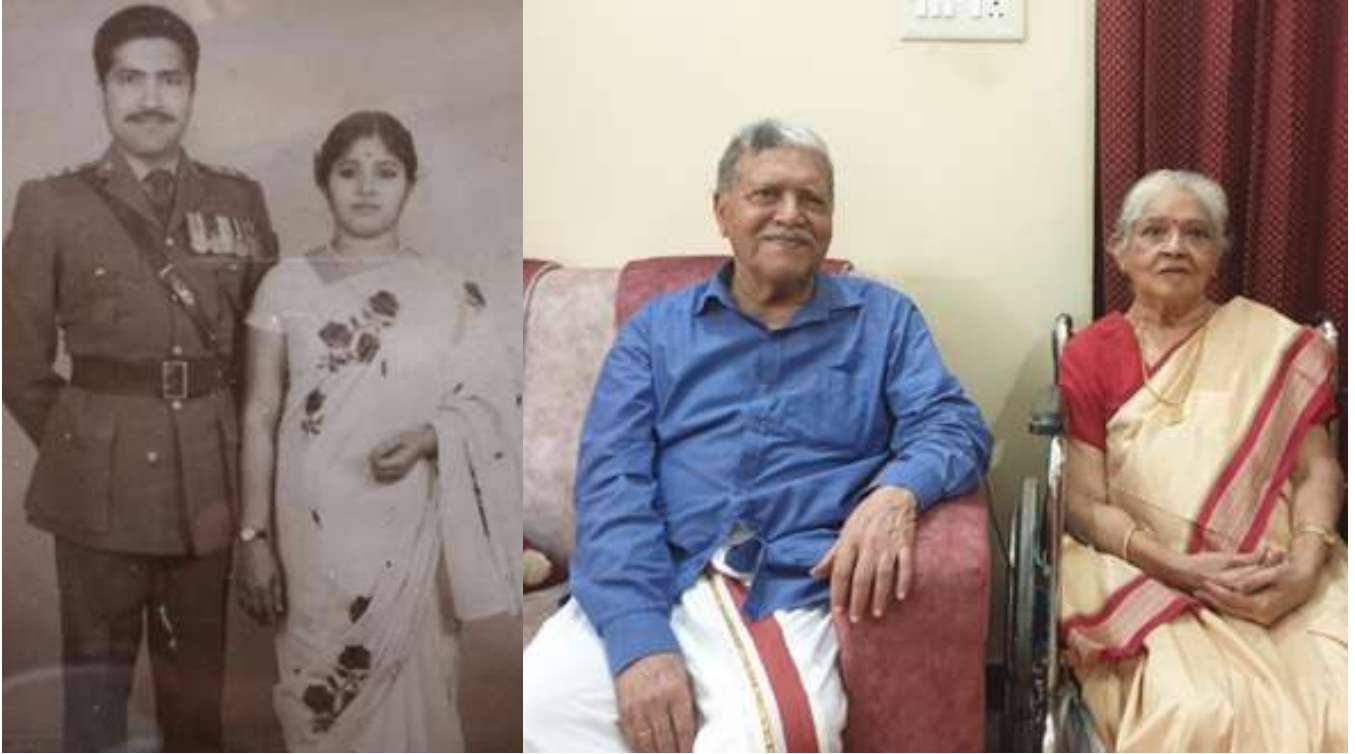
CHERISH...	LET GO....
<p>Mess Etiquettes and Social Courtesy Pays! It's an invaluable second nature trait that comes naturally to an Officer and that the corporate leaders do notice. Many of them senior business men and women take expensive soft skills packages to reach where you even "started".</p>	<p>BLACK KNIGHT or WHITE ! No scope of any Grey. Tolerance for ambiguity is a virtue that is much needed. A subordinate may be professionally sound but not in sync with you, have patience, given time he will see your way. Any hurried perception and you've lost a good worker. Learn to coexist.</p>
<p>High Self Esteem – it's not just for Maslow's. It's there in you and helps you maintain high standards in your Organisation.</p>	<p>Veni Vidi Vici !! Much has been accomplished before you even set foot in the company. Take your time, settle down, establish good practices that you gained from previous set ups, carry forward the torch!</p>



Step out of Your Comfort Zone; the Uniform and paraphernalia...

Final Word

Fortunate to have been born into a Fauji family, one has been in and out of cantonments and field areas; 'All India All class' is the definition of the family. The values of honesty and integrity were imbibed very early in the system- unspoken and immaculately followed.



As I left the Uniform my family stood by me. Children were not yet settled and daughter was in the 12th it's a critical zone. My son was undergoing B tech, not yet landed a Job. All was at a sensitive zone, but one went ahead with a prayer on my lips and hope in the heart. Be prepared for the initial dip; one had to face a low zone in the first year but moral support of friends and a clear optimistic outlook could pull me through. Then on, it has been a challenge after another and each more fulfilling than the previous.

At a Vice President level one can contribute very effectively to the Organization- it's payback time.

If moving out into corporate, preferably decide by 40 years of age, review your core competence, study the market, speak to those in corporate and empower yourself for about three or four years with suitably tailored up-skilling.



Once into the fray, don't expect your peers in corporate to pull you into their set up. Friends in corporate may not be able to give you jobs but once you come out some opportunity will seek you out. Remain Hopeful and keep moving, it's a race against time...



*Left : A Family Fun Picture on the Thames Cruise: London 2019.
Right : At a Family wedding in Chandigarh.*

“

“Content is the atomic particle of all digital marketing.”



REBECCA LIEB

Moment In Time

We have started with a Photography section “**Moment in Time**” to provide an outlet for creative side of our esteemed members. The rules for submission are as under:-

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

Title:-

- a. Aperture
- b. Shutter speed
- c. ISO
- d. Camera used
- e. Lens
- f. Focal length.
- g. In case of a mobile click, the same may please be mentioned.

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



**Isle of Skye - iPhone SE, Ver iOS 18.1.1.
By Col Diganta Choudhury**



*Isle of Skye - iPhone SE, Ver iOS 18.1.1.
By Col Diganta Choudhury*

Author of the Month

Noel Ellis

IN INTERACTION WITH UDAY SHRIWAS

Lt Col Noel Ellis (retd) is an ex-NDA officer from 66th NDA course. He was commissioned in June 1985 into the Mechanised Infantry. Col Noel is a very vibrant writer. During his service he has interacted with numerous types of people, be it his colleagues, his seniors or his subordinates and each of his articles portrays that how vivid human nature is and how different their reactions to situations are. He is heavily into reading and leaves no opportunities to pen down his opinion about what is going on in the country.



Uday: Please let us know a little bit about yourself, your background, your education, how you got into writing and why writing is a mission for you?

Noel: I am Lt Col Noel Ellis (Retd), an alumnus of the following institutions. From Class V to XII, Sainik School, Kapurthala, Punjab where my father was the Senior Master and HOD of the English Dept. Graduated from NDA, 66 course (Charlie and India sqn), thereafter went to IMA Dehradun, 76 Course, Keren Coy and was commissioned into 17 Mech Inf (Recce & Sp) Tr. in June 1985.

Served on two deputations, one with Est 22 in which I served in 2 Vikas in HAA and Instructor at SFF Academy. In the second deputation with 3 Naga Hills Battalion the Assam Rifles, served with them in the Kashmir valley under a RR Sector and later in Manipur. I did my Staff College in 1999-2000, DSSC 54. Participated in OP Vijay as a company commander and OP Parakram as a DQ of an Armoured Brigade. Did one stint with MI directorate at AHQ, Delhi and also did PG in 'Human Rights' while in service.

Took PMR in 2007 and attended the second Armed Forces Programme at IIM, Ahmedabad. Thereafter, joined the corporate sector in Bombay. Initially with companies dealing with Infrastructure development and finally with JSW Steel as Head Administration and Security from where I hung my boots after having spent 10 years with them. Now settled in the Sun City or the Blue city called Jodhpur, Rajasthan permanently. My wife is a home maker and my daughter is a Lawyer by profession.

As a student I participated in debates, declamations, paper reading contests, dramatics, poetry competitions and essay writing contests. I also had the privilege of being the 'editor' of the school magazine for the English and Punjabi section. The fictional stories I wrote as a kid probably was the start of my literary life. I was very fond of reading fiction and read almost a novel a day since school days till even after getting commissioned as an officer.

The art of writing was limited to the letters which I wrote to my father from NDA and later my wife while posted in HAA and thereafter.



Noel in his Corporate Avatar – the Cabin Office !

Uday: You have authored many articles and books. It is indeed intriguing to see that you write on vast number of subject . How do you decide to write and is there a backstory to this? Do you have any process to your writing? If so please share.

Noel: The real story of writing began when I was in Mumbai in 2008 after taking PMR and joining my first civil job. Till then one could never write anything much being in the Army.

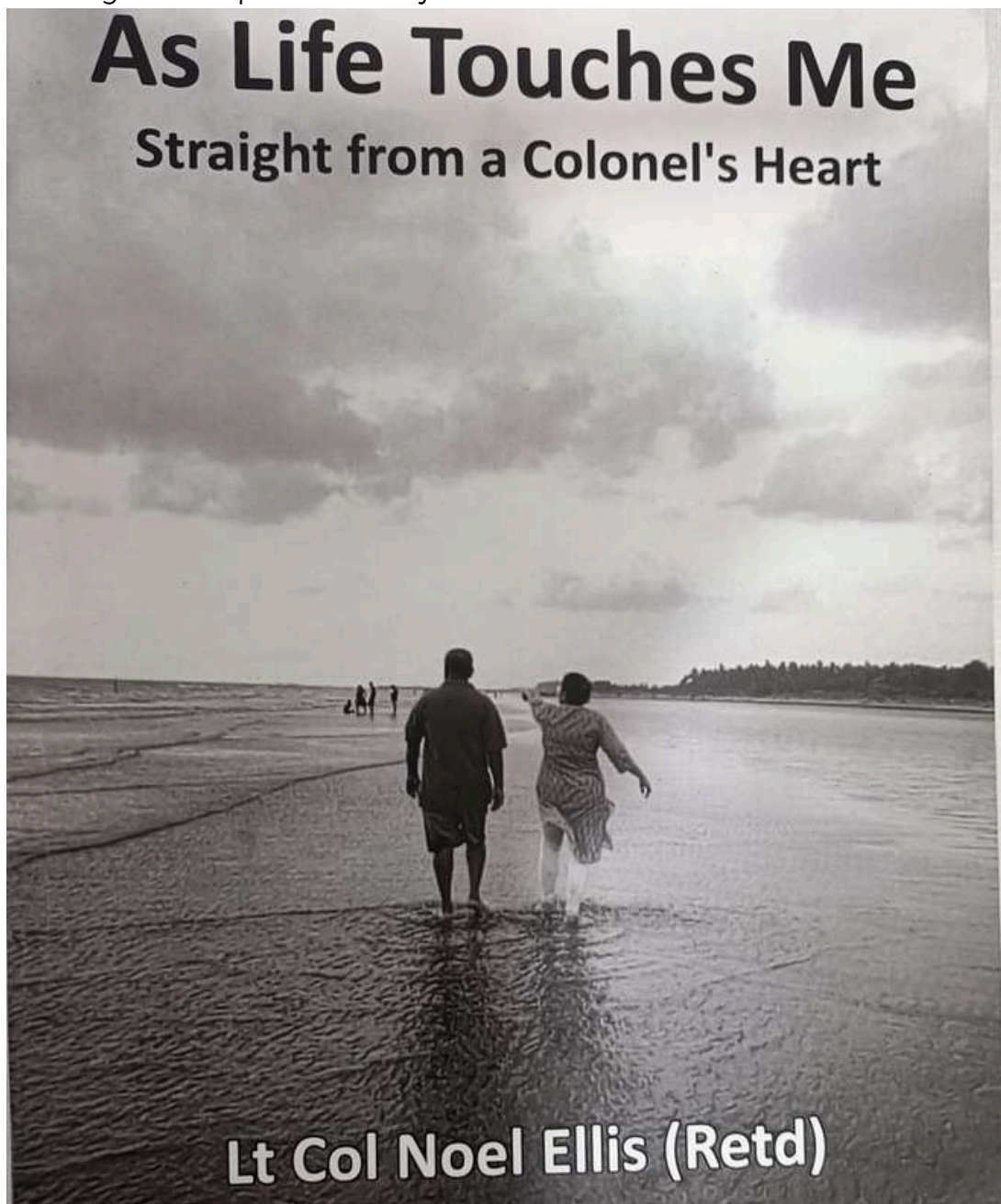
I was the Head of Security of a Company which was looking after a very famous club and sports complex called NSCI opposite Haji Ali in Mumbai, when my COO requested me to present a safety and security plan for the complex. It was a very prestigious club and the elite of Bombay like senior bureaucrats serving and retired were members of that club. An elaborate and detailed plan on all kinds of scenarios of an attack on the complex was worked out by land, sea, air and their combination there to and presented to the IG of Police Mumbai. It was well appreciated by the top Police echelons.

Soon 26/11 happened. In hindsight, one realised that they had Intelligence for a major terrorist attack but where, how, when, with how many was a big question mark. I felt my presentation was an eye opener as I had discussed the use of sea for an attack on NSCI through Haji Ali Bay and the actual attack happened from the Gateway of India. Being in the corporate, I could spare sometime to write and my first article was on 26/11 attack, its prevention and repercussions. Thus started my journey of writing in real earnest.

Another prominent article was on the massacre of a CRPF convoy in Dantewada where 72 personnel lost their lives called, "Who cares for the Indian Soldier" in 2008-09. It went viral on my circuit, as in those days social media was in nascent stages.

This gave me the confidence to write about things which I could not address or speak about while serving due to so many restrictions. Now that I had retired, I was a free bird and wrote on things military to start with. There were so many things which were happening and Pakistan and terrorism in J&K being so close to my heart was one of my favourite subject which I used to address those days.

Slowly, I drifted from Military subjects to all subjects which touched my heart. Any topic which made an impact to me and people in general or society in particular would encourage me to pen down my views.



Col Noel's first Book

This led to the publication of my first book named “As Life Touches Me”, with topics close to a Colonel’s heart. It is a collection of about 50 of my articles on various topics including military, general, political, sports, media events which happened and left a deep impact on me.

Thereafter there was no looking back as some of my articles were picked up by newspapers and various periodicals as middles. ‘Fauji India’, ‘The Citizen’ etc are a few which I can mention very proudly.

Uday. What are the important aspects covered in your articles and books ? Also, inspiration you derive from daily life to think and write on so many subjects ?

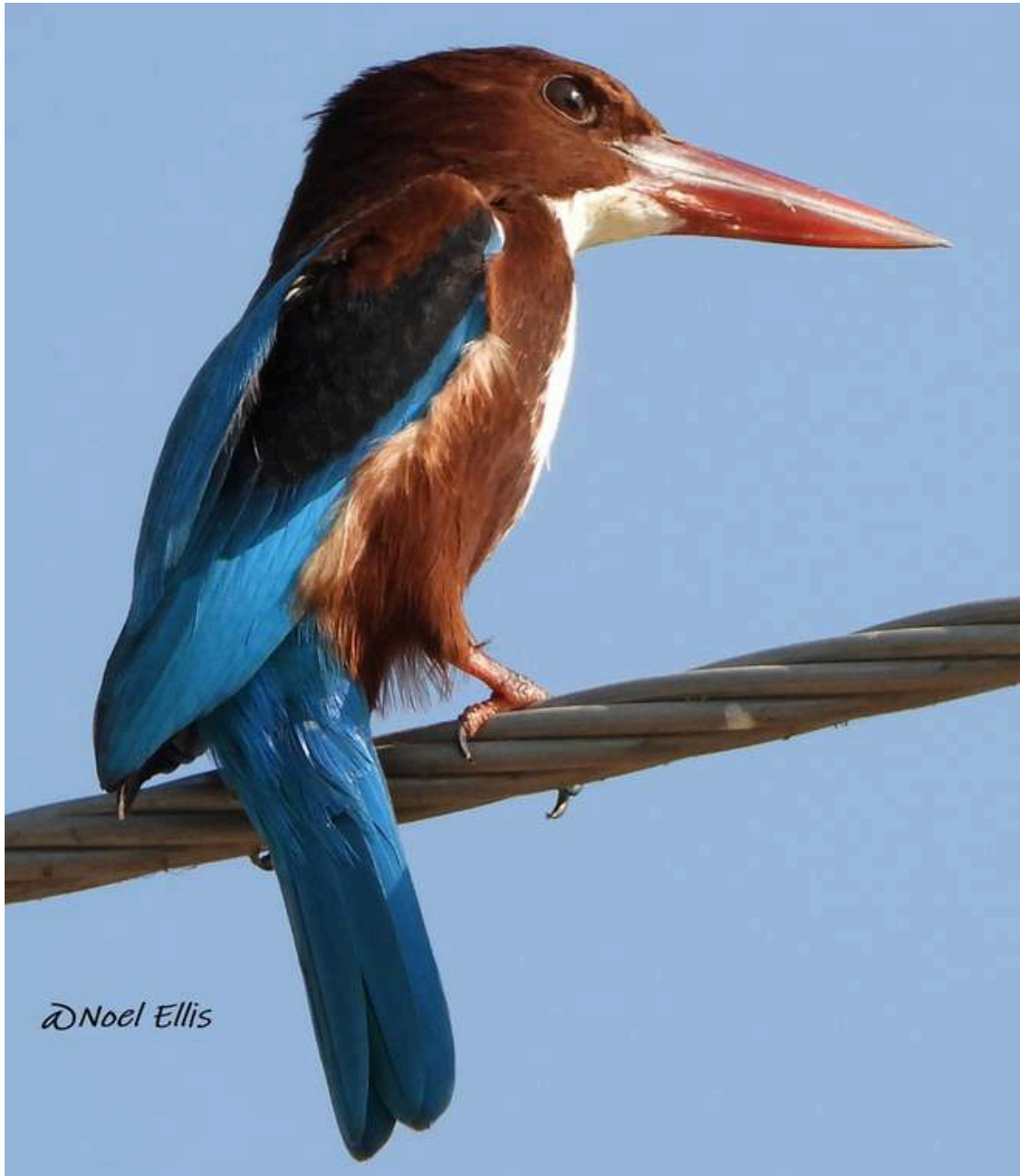
Noel: There is no definite topic I write on. My writings and jottings are penned by instinct. Nostalgia and correlation with what is happening in the present gets imbibed into my scribbles. Incidents of real life get connected with my memories which flow into an article. It could be a person, incident, bird, stray, flower or military matter. What hurts me, influences me and has some relation to the society gets penned.

Now I devote my time in three hobbies that I pursue very passionately. One, is writing short articles, two is gardening which also has generated many articles and last but not the least is Photography. The last hobby I picked up just before finally retiring and today, I can shoot wildlife and stills. My Camera and pen are weapons I carry everywhere I go as subjects can pop up without notice.



Noel's other Passion

As they say a picture speaks more than a 1000 words, my photographs get woven into stories and anecdotes which happen as we go through life.



Shot with Noel's other weapon the camera the first one being the Pen

Uday: How did you conduct your research on this book? What were the major insights you learnt from your research? Anything that deeply impacted you? Please share few anecdotes from your book “As Life Touches “.

Noel: My book is a collection of articles I have written on various subjects. One of my best articles in that is “Our Deer Pinky’ on page 86, which is a true story and happened when I was a school going child. The second must read is about the corporate life which I have named “Irritant and Militant” page 25, “Ladakh Diaries” page 67, “Indian Military Academy Tales” page 117 and many others.

Uday: Please tell us a little bit about the book. How did it come about ? What is it that you wish to share with the larger world through that book?

Noel: The book is a set of articles which can touch a common man's heart. It is a way of seeing civil life through a military man's perspective. Many of them are lessons learnt in life and how the Army training, ethos and Dastoor has helped me live a life in the civil and lessons which can be imbibed by corporate employees and civilians to become better citizens of this country.

My book is a collection of articles I have written on various subjects. One of my best articles in that is "Our Deer Pinky" on page 86, which is a true story and happened when I was a school going child. The second must read is about the corporate life which I have named "Irritant and Militant" page 25, "Ladakh Diaries" page 67, "Indian Military Academy Tales" page 117 and many others.

Uday: What is your style of writing or the creative process ?Do you make a list of points then create a draft and then refine it or do you have long sittings to pen the book? Is there a specific routine you follow while writing a book?

Noel: My style of writing is simple, easy to understand and assimilate and easy to relate with. I use roman Hindi and Hindi to add to the flavour of being a son of the soil. No, I do not make a draft or jot down points, they just flow as I key in the words. One thing leads to another, at times I drift into nostalgia of childhood and army life, which give articles a unique taste and niche.

Most of the articles are written in one sitting. If the chain and flow of thought breaks, many things get left out or get overlooked. One sitting at a stretch is good enough to consolidate my thoughts and draft the article as such. Proof reading and corrections is a separate issue where I take help from my wife who moderates my thoughts sometimes, or mellows down the language, when I feel very strongly about certain things. There is no particular time to write, it could be any time of the day or night. A thought must occur, it must touch a nerve deep inside and that's what motivates me to key in.

Uday: What gives you the strength as an author and speaker on important topics ? Have there been any challenges for you – if so, how do you handle them?

Noel: My Schooling and Army background is my biggest strength. My choice of words and voice modulation adds to the final product especially when I motivate young minds to become law abiding and a shade better citizens flowing with confidence and standing out from the rest of the crowd.

I am my own challenge. Rest I do not bother about what people might say or would say. What comes to my mind, gets woven into thoughts and articles. All those who criticise are more than welcome, it helps me improve. All those who get nasty are returned a favour in the same coin, no holds barred.

My thoughts flow from my originality, thinking ability, analytical skills, and passion to convey certain things to all those who do not have a voice or do not voice their concerns and apprehensions. It is the voice of a common man or the 'mango man' the 'Aam admi'. My articles are relatable but most of the times a spark to many who did/could not speak for reasons best known to them.

Uday: Tell us about your family. How do they take it when you are busy writing , reading and researching your books and articles?

Noel: My wife and I are passionate gardeners and a team. All my jottings are read and understood from her angle and perspective. The impact which it should make and the target audience which I interact with are known to her. She sometimes helps me soften my chain of thoughts or use different vocabulary which is more impactful.

I research on the go. I have not used AI much for research but that is one thing which I want to use in the research work in future. My articles though will continue to be original and never AI generated. My friends have been very helpful in getting my articles translated in various vernacular like Hindi, Punjabi and Marathi. People have appreciated them with the same warmth, though my basic medium of communication remains English.



With his Better Half

Uday: What are your future plans regarding writing?

Noel: I plan to continue writing on anything and everything under the sun. I now avoid matters military, media and politics, though Military and in particular the Army stays very close to my heart.

Uday: How can our readers keen to pick up a copy of your book do so ?

Noel: The book is available on Flipkart, link is attached.

<https://www.flipkart.com/life-touches-me/p/itmfd8xgj68mnykb?pid=9788170104353>

Uday: Five books that you recommend reading for all our readers. And why should one read them?

Noel: The art of reading is slowly vanishing. The days of holding a paper pack are long gone. Therefore to recommend books would not be correct. For young readers, I recommend READ, just read anything you like or can lay your hands on like we used to do as kids. Make it a habit and avoid reading what social media pushes to pollute the mind.

I also would like to encourage young readers to develop a hobby. Any hobby and work on it with passion.



***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



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Knowledge Bytes

Writing - An Evolution

BY VANDANA BHATIA PALLI

Entering the eighth year of my publishing career and celebrating six years since the inception of Highbrow Scribes Publications, I've gleaned a wealth of lessons from the journey of writing and publishing.

In the age of digital technology, virtually everything is just a click away. Yet, amidst this abundance of information, it's crucial to question the accuracy of what we encounter, as it often shapes our assumptions and conclusions. This challenge extends to writers navigating numerous channels to understand the workings of the publishing industry. While a writer's primary focus is often on crafting compelling stories, the pivotal role of a publisher cannot be overstated.

Indeed, that's a beautifully poetic way to describe the relationship between a writer and a publisher. The manuscript, like a seed, is the idea conceived by the writer, nurtured with passion and creativity. Then, through the collaboration with a publisher, this seed blossoms into a fully realized book, ready to make its mark in the world. Just as a parent guide and supports a child's growth, a publisher plays a vital role in bringing the writer's, and his vision to life and helping it flourish.

Overcoming writer's block is a common challenge for many writers, especially those new to the craft. Drawing from your learnings and experiences, you can offer valuable insights and strategies to help writers navigate through these hurdles. Encouraging them to embrace their creativity, find inspiration in everyday experiences, and establish a supportive writing routine can make a significant difference. Additionally, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and self-compassion can empower writers to push through moments of doubt and continue on their writing journey. Providing practical tips and exercises to spark creativity and reignite their passion for writing can also be incredibly beneficial. By sharing your wisdom and guidance, you can help aspiring writers unlock their full potential and overcome any obstacles they may encounter along the way.

Documentation

Stories have always been an integral part of human communication, whether they're based on personal experiences or products of our imagination. As writers, we have the power to harness the universal appeal of storytelling and connect with people on a profound level. It's not just a creative endeavor; it's a responsibility to share our insights, perspectives, and experiences with the world.

Documenting our ideas in the form of a book is a timeless practice that predates even the invention of paper and pen. From ancient oral traditions to modern digital formats, storytelling has endured as a powerful means of conveying knowledge, culture, and emotion across generations. As thinkers and creators, it's our philanthropic duty to reach out to the masses and enrich their lives with the narratives we craft.



Whether we're weaving tales of adventure, exploring complex emotions, or shedding light on important issues, every story has the potential to inspire, educate, and uplift. By transforming our ideas into books, we not only preserve our own legacy but also contribute to the collective wisdom of humanity. So, let's embrace the timeless art of storytelling and share our stories with the world.

Expertise

Storytelling and writing are indeed skills that can be learned, honed through practice, and mastered over time. While some individuals may have a natural inclination or genetic predisposition towards storytelling, the majority of successful writers have developed their craft through dedication and hard work.

Like any skill, storytelling and writing require patience, persistence, and a willingness to learn from both successes and failures. By studying the techniques of established writers, experimenting with different styles and genres, and seeking feedback from peers and mentors, aspiring writers can gradually refine their abilities and find their unique voice.

Furthermore, the beauty of storytelling lies in its universality – anyone with a story to tell can learn to articulate it effectively through writing. Whether it is through novels, short stories, poetry, or non-fiction, the art of storytelling transcends cultural and genetic boundaries, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to connect with audiences around the world.

By passing on their expertise to future generations, experienced writers not only contribute to the preservation of literary traditions but also inspire and empower aspiring storytellers to share their own unique perspectives with the world. So, while storytelling may not be inherently genetic, it is a skill that can be cultivated and shared, enriching lives and shaping the cultural landscape for generations to come.

Writing – A Therapy

Writing and publishing can indeed provide a writer with credibility as an expert in their field, while also fostering personal, professional, and creative growth. By sharing their knowledge, insights, and experiences with a wider audience, writers not only establish themselves as authorities in their respective domains but also gain a sense of validation and confidence in their abilities.

Furthermore, the act of writing can be incredibly therapeutic, serving as a powerful tool for overcoming psychological or physical challenges. Whether it's through journaling, memoir writing, or creative expression, putting thoughts and emotions into words can provide a sense of catharsis and empowerment. Writing allows individuals to process their experiences, gain clarity, and find healing in the face of adversity.

Moreover, sharing lived experiences of overcoming challenges and achieving goals can have a profound impact on others who may be facing similar struggles. By offering insights, inspiration, and practical advice, writers can help readers navigate their own journeys, instilling hope and motivation along the way. Whether it's through memoirs, self-help books, or personal essays, the power of storytelling lies in its ability to connect people and foster empathy and understanding.

In essence, writing and publishing not only benefit the writer themselves but also have the potential to positively impact the lives of others. Whether it's through personal growth, professional development, or simply finding solace in shared experiences, the transformative power of writing is undeniable.

Social Responsibility

Writers have a profound ability to influence societal change through their writings, using their platforms to raise awareness about social injustices and political unrest. These writers not only articulate the struggles and grievances of marginalized communities but also advocate for meaningful reforms and social transformation.

Prominent figures like Arundhati Roy, Mahashweta Devi, Jhumpa Lahiri, Mulk Raj Anand, and many others have utilized their literary talents to become influential social activists. Through their novels, essays, and speeches, they shed light on issues such as poverty, caste discrimination, gender inequality, human rights violations, and environmental degradation, sparking conversations and mobilizing communities to demand justice and equality.

Their words resonate with readers on a deep emotional level, inspiring empathy, solidarity, and collective action. By giving voice to the voiceless and challenging the status quo, these writers play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and advocating for positive change.

Moreover, the impact of their activism extends far beyond the realm of literature, influencing policy decisions, shaping public opinion, and fostering social movements. Their legacy serves as a reminder of the power of literature to effect meaningful change and uphold the principles of justice, equality, and human dignity.

Legacy

Indeed, a book serves as a lasting testament to the author's personality, thoughts, skills, and hard work. It encapsulates their unique perspective and contributions, preserving their legacy for generations to come. As such, authors hold a special place in the journey of people's growth, whether it be in moments of recovery, survival, or personal development.

Through their writings, authors become role models, inspiring readers to overcome challenges, pursue their dreams, and strive for greatness. Their words have the power to uplift spirits, ignite passions, and instil hope in the hearts of those who may be facing adversity.



Moreover, a book can serve as a source of guidance and wisdom, offering insights and lessons learned from the author's own experiences. Whether it's through memoirs, self-help books, or works of fiction, authors have the ability to touch lives, spark conversations, and leave a lasting impact on society. Ultimately, by sharing their stories, authors fulfill the purpose of life – to connect with others, inspire change, and leave the world a better place than they found it. In doing so, they leave behind a legacy that transcends time, enriching the lives of countless individuals for generations to come.

A book is a serious commitment of your time, energy and creativity and only few in millions can go for that.

Happy writing!

Happy publishing!



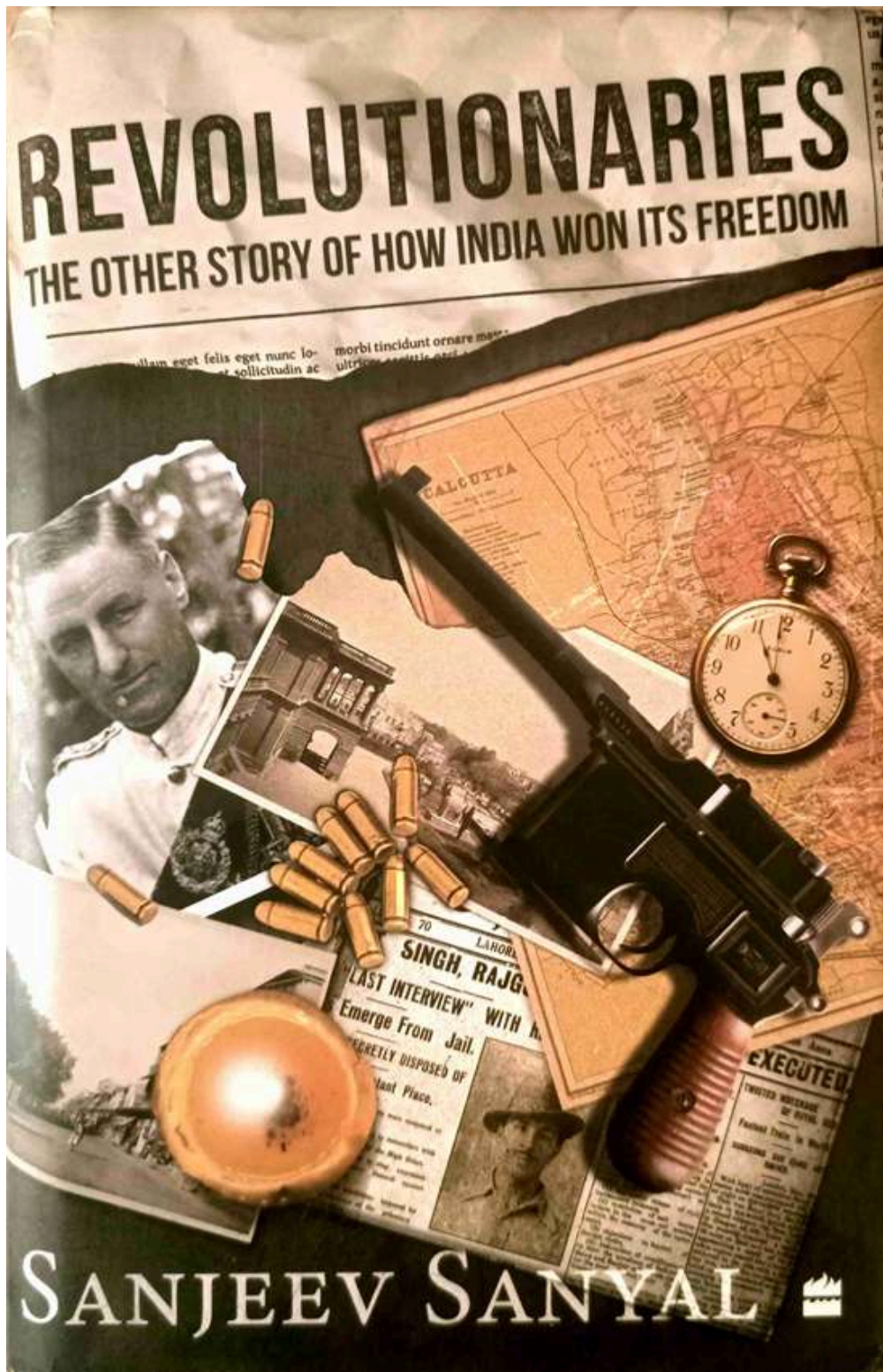
Vandana Bhatia Palli is a dynamic individual who has explored multiple professional arenas before finding her footing as a homemaker and then rediscovering her passion in the literary world. With a mission to collaborate with both budding and established writers, she set-up a publishing company, *Highbrow Scribes Publications*, and aims to help transform the writers' creativity into reality and establish them as modern author brands. She ensures debut authors receive the proper guidance and mentorship on the essential aspects of publishing, setting them on the path to success. Beyond her involvement in publishing, She recently participated in the Villgro and UNDP course on Women Entrepreneurs and also completed a short course on Stress Management.

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Book Review

REVOLUTIONARIES (THE OTHER STORY OF HOW INDIA WON ITS FREEDOM)

BY VARUN KUMAR DHAND



Introduction

This book was given to me as a gift by my significant other, who noticed my interest in the role of revolutionaries in our national freedom struggle. After reading the book, I can say that I was already familiar with about 80% of its content, from Veer Savarkar's Abhinav Bharat to Sachindra Nath Sanyal's Hindustan Republican Association, from Sohan Singh Bhakna's Ghadar Movement to Netaji's Subhas Chandra Bose Azad Hind Fauj. I was fortunate enough to learn about the role of Satish Chandra Bose in Anushilan Samiti, about which I had limited knowledge. Aurobindo Ghosh was a discovery for me; I used to think he was a monk and philosopher, but he was also one of the founders of India's freedom movement. These are just a few of the revolutionaries I have mentioned; the full list will be published at the end of this book review.

This book contains exciting stories of revolutionaries who played a cat-and-mouse game with the British. Revolutionaries, along with their organizations, played a decisive role in achieving freedom for today's India. Many revolutionaries lived comfortable lives before joining the freedom struggle. They chose to leave behind worldly comforts and pleasures, with many making the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for their motherland. The life stories of these revolutionaries, as narrated in the book, touched my heart, as they were mentally and physically tortured by the British, and India neglected their welfare after gaining independence. This book dispels the myth and illusion that India gained its freedom solely due to the efforts of Congress.

About the Author

Sanjeev Sanyal is a writer, economist and urbanist. He grew up in Kolkata and attended Delhi University before going on to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. He then spent two decades in international financial markets, where he became the managing director and global strategist of Europe's largest bank. He was named as 'Young Global Leader' by the World Economic Forum in 2010. While living in Singapore, he took up the study of cities and was awarded the Eisenhower Fellowship for his work on urban dynamics.



In 2017, he joined the Indian Government as the principal economic advisor. He became a member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's economic advisory council in 2022. He has represented India in many international forums, including as co-chair of the Framework Working Group of G20 for five years. He is presently the Chancellor of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics.

His best-selling books include Land of the Seven Rivers: A brief History of India's Geography, The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped the Human History and Life over Two Beers.

Chapter 1 The Age of Revolution

This chapter explains how Congress was formed by Allan Octavian Hume as a safety valve in 28 December 1885. A.O. Hume has reached out to leading educated Indians to build a common platform to stop further uprising like 1857, famine and its effects which will help Britishers to stay in power. This Congress party can still be seen actively participating in Indian politics and it's like a curse for the country, as they are responsible for country's partition and emergency era.

Chapter 2: Bhawani Mandir

This chapter explored the role of Akhadas (wrestling clubs) in nation's awakening for freedom struggle through military training imparted by Anushilan Samiti. There was a web of revolutionaries from Bengal to Cawnpore (today's Kanpur), from Peshawar to down south. It went on to narrate the tales of revolutionaries like how they were operating and sustain their revolutionary activities and remain the torch bearers of Indian freedom struggle. It explained in detail the partition of Bengal where Britishers had sown early seeds of partition. Singing Vande Mataram was once a crime and was seditious in nature as per laws enacted by British. It also throws light on how local people resisted to 'Samrajyavaad' (Imperialism) by boycotting the British goods.

Chapter 3 India House

India House as name suggests was a shelter home for Indian Revolutionaries in London (England). It explains how different people with different mindset live together but with one common agenda of freeing the motherland from clutches of Britishers. Story starts how revolutionaries carrying robberies on British Treasury and attack on British officials to sustain the revolution. Further it narrates how young Veer Savarkar was inspired by act of Chapekar brothers (Killing of British Plague Commissioner Walter Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst) in formation of Abhinav Bharat. I recall Veer Savarkar's famous quote of his historical book 'The Indian War of Independence 1857', I quote "Nation that has no consciousness of its past has no future". People even don't know till date how Madan Lal Dhingra assassinated Sir William Curzon (Political Aide-de- Camp to Secretary of State for British India) like Udham Singh assassinated Michael O' Dwyer (Lieutenant Governor of Punjab who was responsible for Jallianwala Massacre)

Chapter 4: The Ghadar

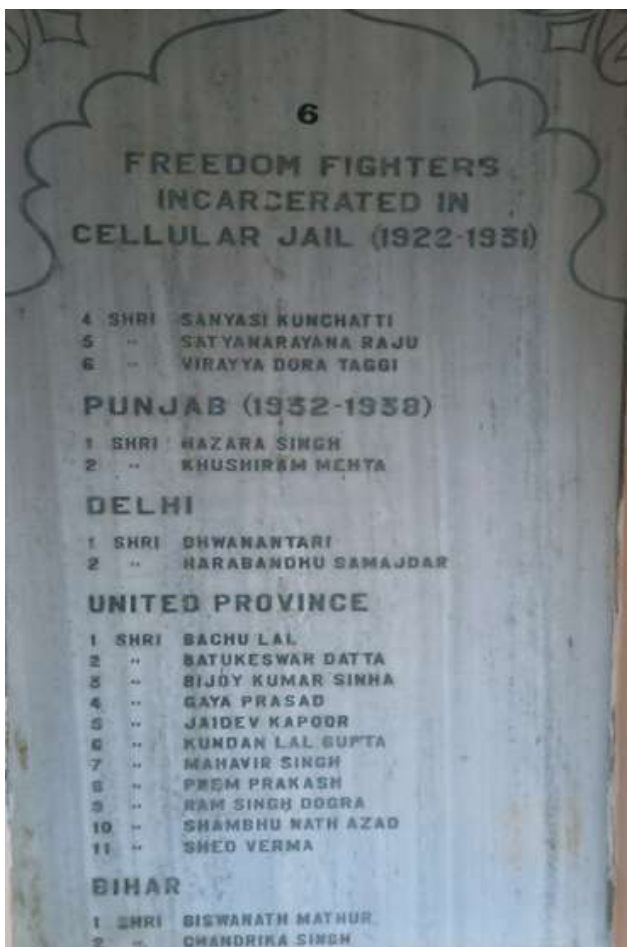
It explains the concessions given by Britishers in the form of Indians Councils Act (Minto Morley Reforms) and insidiously introduced separate electorates for Muslims which carved the cracks in Hindu - Muslim unity. It further explained how British had cracked down on the 1st and 2nd generations of the revolutionaries through their clandestine intelligence network.

From Nashik to England & back to Andaman's, how British was after Savarkar to get tried him to court & extradite him to India. It also shows of how Britishers were petrified by the Savarkar and his thoughts presence which could have fuel rebellion in

the society. Attack on Viceroy Lord Hardinge and social conquest by British of Sikhs in Punjab were discussed after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's downfall.

Chapter 5: Kala Paani

Kala Paani, the notorious place built by the British for the political prisoners to be kept in inhuman conditions under the name of Cellular Jail. It narrates how Cellular Jail was constructed by the British, under what brutal conditions the prisoners were living and what work Britishers make them to do. The stories were so horrific the individual heart gets pounded and imagine the atrocities the prisoners had to go through. Author unveiled heinous nature of British Raj with introduction of Rowlatt Act and to build up to Jallianwala Massacre. It further explicated how British crushed Ghadar movement and non-cooperation movement were in vain despite various massacres done by the British.



Inscription mentioning names of prisoners in Cellular Jail

Poster explaining meaning of 'Kala Pani' from museum in Cellular Jail.

Chapter 6: The Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)

HRA was instituted by Sachindra Nath Sanyal and was taken ahead by comrades like Bhagat Singh, Ram Prasad Bismil, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Rajguru, Batukeshwar Dutt, Sukhdev & many others. Various groups of Anushilan Samiti were also brought under one roof of HRA. It was revolutionaries who first enunciated idea of fully independent democratic republic & raise slogan of Poorna Swaraj.

Apart from rebel struggle, Eka Movement and Rampa Rebellion was headed by peasants & forests tribals was also well described by the author. Their names and their contributions were erased from the public memory and historical references of Indian freedom struggle consciously by the historians and politicians.

The reading of famous Kakori train robbery & its aftermath, how Bhagat Singh avenged Lala Lajpat Rai death by eliminating John P. Saunders (British Police Officer in Lahore) was like watching a patriotic movie Shaheed Bhagat Singh. It also throws light on how British informers like Yashpal was working against revolutionaries and how they were elevated in government ranks after independence.

Chapter 7: Chittagong

Charismatic leader Surya Sen hailed from Chittagong and had set a trap with web of revolutionaries who paralysed the British Administration. He led a determined group of revolutionaries in a daring raid on British police armories in Chittagong. Surya Sen was inspired by the Easter Rebellion in Ireland in 1916, particularly the capture of Dublin by few hundred men, had a deep impact on him. Readers can also watch Abhishek Bachchan starrer movie 'Khel Khel Mein' for heroics of Surya Sen. Various other topics covered like how Gandhi forced Netaji Subhas to resign from Congress to formation of Forward Bloc by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. How Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Communist Party of India came into existence and unholy Marxist- Islamist Nexus were also discussed.

Chapter 8: 'One More Fight: The Last and the Best'

How revolutionaries smelled World War II as an opportunity to attain freedom for Bharat. Netaji's Subhas Chandra Bose dramatic and thriller escape to Europe via Afghanistan were discussed in length. He had met Hitler and he persuaded him for India's independence. Netaji also got married in Germany with his German wife Emilie Schenkl and had one daughter named Anita Bose. Netaji move to South East Asia through stimulating but perilous submarine sortie and was transferred to Japanese. Netaji also took the baton of Indian Independence League (IIL) from Rash Bihari Bose (Founder of IIL in Tokyo and key organisers of Ghadar Mutiny and even made an attempt to assassinate then Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge in 1912 under Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case). There are horrific tales of Indian Revolutionaries which were severely tortured by British. Many of them were never recovered, lived a life of misery and didn't even get their due in pages of history. How tragic Bengal famine was a man-made 'catastrophe' which resulted death of millions of people in Bengal was

documented? How British tried to prosecute Indian Army officials through INA trials held in Red Fort, Delhi? As Retired Naval Officer, I am really proud of the Royal Indian Navy sailors who revolted against British Raj and it also became one of the reasons for the British to leave Bharat. I am penning down my thoughts of “Naval Mutiny” for the readers.

“The Naval Mutiny”

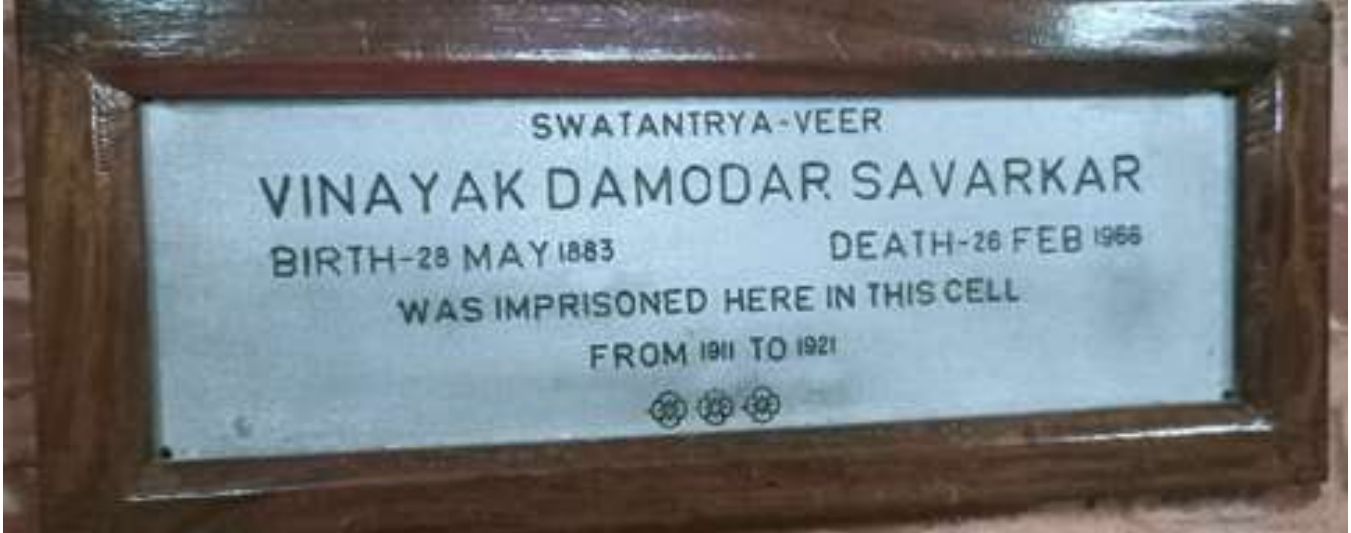
Naval Mutiny has stunned and shaken the foundational roots of British Indian Armed Forces. It all started in Bombay Marine, local auxiliary to support Royal Navy and present day it is Indian Navy’s Motor Transport (MT) Pool. The fertile grounds for this mutiny were the overcrowding of naval camps by sailors, inadequate arrangements for food, housing and worse attitude of British officers. A small group of naval sailors namely Madan Singh, Mohammed Shuaib Khan, Rishi Dev Puri and Balai Chandra Dutt had started the initial rebellion. The mutiny spread it like a fire to 20,000 sailors, 78 ships and 21 shore establishments. The revolt even spread to Karachi, Travancore and Calcutta ships and shore establishments. The British even ordered Royal Indian Air force (RAIF) to get ready to bomb the ships but RAIF squadron was mysteriously grounded due to engine problems. Gurkha and Baloch soldiers refused to fire on the sailors and had to be replaced by European troops. The Britishers responded by ordering the troops to fire on the protestors. The number of casualties is estimated to be around 700 dead and 1500 wounded. It was a deliberate attempt to suppress the ‘Naval Mutiny’ even after Bharat attained independence. It fills my heart with lot of anguish after serving Indian Navy as there were no talk of Navy’s contribution to freedom struggle which is labelled as mutiny till date. There is no memorial erected by Indian Navy till date for the remembrance of naval sailors who fought against British.

Summary

I as a curious student to know about Indian history, thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. This book reignited my interest to explore the unanswered questions related to Indian freedom struggle. British had used ‘Divide and Rule Policy’ to fragment Indians and had weaved a web of spies around revolutionaries due to which they were able to track and hunt them down around the globe. So, Indians betrayed Indians.

The stories narrated in the book must be part of history textbooks so as to bust the myth that India got freedom due to non – violence tool, Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi. It’s national duty to bring revolutionaries sacrifices before nation so that young generations can learn, how today Bharat got its independence. It helps them to understand the value of freedom in which they are taking fresh air. Martyrs Memorial must be enacted on the lines of National War Memorial in every district of the country highlighting the sacrifice of local heroes during freedom struggle. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar must be given ‘Bharat Ratna’ for his service to the nation in order to correct the wrong doings of the history. There are various state secrets hidden under Officials

Secrets Act (India) 1923 (Colonial Law enacted by British) must be de - classified. A policy must be enacted by Indian Government to streamline declassify process for historical data so that after certain time duration (may be 10 years from the date of occurrence) it must automatically declassified and come in public domain for deliberations and state's awakening.



Name Tally of Veer Savarkar in front of his room in Cellular Jail

Recommendation and Rating

'A Complete Package' is a phrase for this book as a recommendation. This book can make inroads in minds of Gen 'Z' and 'A' through parents and teachers. This would be a great service to the nation if future generations understand their nation's past which would help them decolonize their mind.

My rating for this book is 4 Stars: Everyone must realize that many had laid down their lives for the future. Today & future generations must value it and make every effort to sustain the gift of freedom we all enjoy.



Lt Cdr Varun Kumar Dhand *retd from Indian Navy with 11 years of service in Executive cadre. He had left Indian Navy in 2018. Presently, he is working as Deputy Manager (Security) in State Bank of India, Mumbai. He is passionate of reading books, running marathons, writing book reviews, write and debate on different topics of national importance. Readers can share their feedback of book review at dhand1984@gmail.com*

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Names of 138 Revolutionaries which I had read in the book

Lala Hardiyal	Amir Chand	Lala Lajpat Rai	Moti Lal Roy	Basanta Kumar Vishwas
Digambar Vishwas	Amir Chand	Avadh Behari	Bal Mukund	Jyotindranath Mukherjee
Sachindranath Sanyal	Vishnu Ganesh Pingle	Praful Chandra Ganguli	Bagha Jatin	Harnam Singh Sahri
Tarakanth Das	Bhai Parmanand	Jawala Singh	Sohan Singh Bhakana	Kartar Singh Sarabha
Chandrakanta Chakravarty	Gurdit Singh	Mewa Singh	Mula Singh	Bhagwan Singh
Viren Chattopadhyey	Champak Pillai	Nalinaksha Sanyal	Anadi Kanta	Narendranath Bhattacharya
Mangoo Ram	Pandurang Khankhaje	Pramath Nath Dutta	Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh	Adhar Chandar Laskar
Barkatullah	Agashe	Santhokh Singh	Indu Bhushan Roy	Ullaskar Dutt
Nani Gopal	Mahasha Rattan Chand	Chaudhri Bugga Mal	Ghulam Jilani	Chitranjan Das
Hussain Shahed Suhrowardy	Kazi Nazrul Islam	Heramba Lal Gupta	Ram Prasad Bismil	Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose
Asfaquallah Khan	Bhagat Singh	Madari Pasi	Alluri Seetha Ram Raju	Mallu Dora
Ghantam Dora	Surya Sen	Bhupendra Nath Sanyal	Sachindranath Bakshi	Rajendra Lahiri
Sirish Ghosh	Thakur Roshan Singh	Sukhdev Thapar	Chandrashekhar Azad	Basanti Devi
Bhikhaji Rustom Cama	Bhagwati Charan	Shivaram Rajguru	Durga Devi	Chajju Ram
Batukeshwar Dutt	Ram Sharan Das	Jatin Das	Jaydev Kapoor	Shiv Verma
Purshottam Das Tandon	Anuj Sen	Dinesh Majumdar	Denry Basu	Badal Gupta
Dinesh Gupta	Tunu	Bina Das	Giani Pritam Singh	Swami Satyananda Puri

Sirish Ghosh	Thakur Roshan Singh	Sukhdev Thapar	Chandrashekhar Azad	Basanti Devi
Bhikhaji Rustom Cama	Bhagwati Charan	Shivaram Rajguru	Durga Devi	Chajju Ram
Batukeshwar Dutt	Ram Sharan Das	Jatin Das	Jaydev Kapoor	Shiv Verma
Purshottam Das Tandon	Anuj Sen	Dinesh Majumdar	Denry Basu	Badal Gupta
Abid Hassan	N G Swami	ACN Nambiar	Madan Singh	Mohammed Shaib Khan
Rishi Dev Puri	Baalai Chandra Dutt	Aurobindo Ghosh	Barin Ghosh	Sister Nivedita
Keshub Chandra Sen	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	Madan Lal Dhingra	Jatindranath Banerji	Lal-Bal-Pal
Bhupendra Nath Dutta	Surendra Banerjee	Tribhuvandas Malvi	Rashbehari Ghosh	Hemchandra Das
Pandurang Bapat	Prafulla Chaki	Khudiram Bose	Rash Behari Bose	Kanialal Dutt
Satyen Bose	Veer Savarkar	Vasudev Balwant Phadke	Birsa Munda	Damodar Hari Chapekar/Balkrishna Hari Chapekar/Vasudeo Hari Chapekar
VO Chidambaram Pillai	Shyamji Krishna Verma	Dayanand Saraswati	John Devoy	Sardar Sinh Revaji Rana
Dinesh Gupta	Tunu	Bina Das	Giani Pritam Singh	Swami Satyananda Puri
Abid Hassan	N G Swami	ACN Nambiar	Madan Singh	Mohammed Shaib Khan
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VO Chidambaram Pillai	Shyamji Krishna Verma	Dayanand Saraswati	John Devoy	Sardar Sinh Revaji Rana
Mazzini	VVS Aiyar	Sikandar Hayat Khan	Mirza Abbas	Chaturbhuj Amin
Gyanchand Verma	Mohan Lal Pandya	Anatrao Laxman Kanhere	Sinntein (Irish Revolutionary)	Jatindra Mohan Chatterjee
Sufi Amba Prasad	Sardar Ajit Singh	Kissen Singh	Mahadev Ranade	

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NOEL LAND: DEDICATED SECTION FOR THE STAR AUTHOR OF FORCES NETWORK



LT COL NOEL ELLIS

We welcome Col Noel to the folds of the Forces Network. We have decided to devote a Section to his writings every month in the ForceNet E-Zine

Knowledge Bytes

Lessons From a Flock

BY NOEL ELLIS

The other day we went for a picnic to a place close by from where we stay. We were excited and happy to join the fun as a family and drove to the site.

On the way, there is a small lake. One sighted some demoiselles cranes and other water birds. As usual, I was armed with my weapon aka camera. Halting at that time would have delayed us from getting to the picnic site. One was sure that there would be an opportune moment when I would be able to catch them.



The Beautiful Demoiselles Cranes

On a walk around the property, a group of Mynahs (Brahminy Starling) posed for me on the boundary wall. The ruckus they were creating was because their usual place had been occupied by the cooks & helpers in a makeshift kitchen. All the worms which they usually caught were now under the cooking utensils.

There was a 'lull' after lunch. People were feeling cold and I was feeling itchy to head to the lake.

The first thing that caught my attention at the lake was this lone Indian Soft Shelled Turtle. It was basking in the sun on the bank. With its neck fully extended, it kept an eye on its surroundings. For a moment, when he saw me, he retracted his neck into the shell. It understood, I meant no harm and thrust it out again.



The Indian Soft Shelled Turtle

The cranes and ducks roosted on an island. A few ducks sat on the wall of an old well inside the lake. Stones must be giving the warmth they need in winter.

That is when I noticed that I had missed a great spectacle. There was a flock of goats and sheep which had come for a drink to the lake. A single 'herdsman' was herding them with his typical calls and whistles.

All of them waited at the bank of the lake patiently till the time the herdsman whistled to them to take a drink. The ones closest to the lake drank first and made way for the others.

There must be more than two hundred of them. Once sure that all of them had quenched their thirst, he blew another shrill & sharp whistle by puckering his lips, a signal for his flock to move on.



The Flock of Goats and Sheep

The dust they kicked up appeared to be like a cloud rising. Their closeness to each other gave them strength in numbers. Their leader knew the way, the rest followed at its heels, called 'Bhed Chal' in the Army.

A thought echoed in my mind was that just look at them. They eat and drink together. They eat what they find, drink without any filters and do not care for tomorrow. Sheep leave behind everything and don't carry any burden with them. They do fight but all is forgotten soon. Life is so simple.

Those animals are obedient and disciplined. They 'bleat' to communicate. What could they be discussing? The biting cold, the quality of grass, the polluted water or just gup shup. I am sure they do not use cuss words.

The herdsman knows what they need and where would he get it for such a large herd. The farmer who allows these sheep & goats to graze in his farm is showered with droppings, making an excellent slow dissolving manure for his crop. Both are winners in the end.

Winter is also the time to make wool. In a couple of months, they would be sheared. Some of them would grow old and be sold off. Females would give birth to little ones and raise a family.

The strength of the herd would more or less remain the same. Life's lessons would be learnt on the trot.

Milk they produce is the most nutritious they say. What I learnt from someone is that the herdsman only take what they need to consume and leave the rest for the lambs and kids to strengthen and survive. They do not milch the same animal everyday, but do it in rotation. How thoughtful.

How do they know which goat they took milk from, as all of them look alike? For that, one has to spend a lifetime with them to recognise each one of them. They can trace them with the hoof marks.

They came, they drank and moved away and left me thinking about their simple way of life. Is there a lesson to be learnt by us who walk on two legs and think too much? I wonder!!!!!!

JAI HIND



***Lt Col Noel Ellis (retd)** is an ex-NDA officer from 66th NDA course. He was commissioned in June 1985 into the Mechanised Infantry. Col Noel is a very vibrant writer. His articles relate to his deep experiences which he had as an Army officer. During his service he has interacted with numerous types of people, be it his colleagues, his seniors or his subordinates and each of his articles portrays that how vivid human nature is and how different their reactions to situations are. He is heavily into reading and leaves no opportunities to pen down his opinion about what is going on in the country.*

You can read his [Blog here](#)

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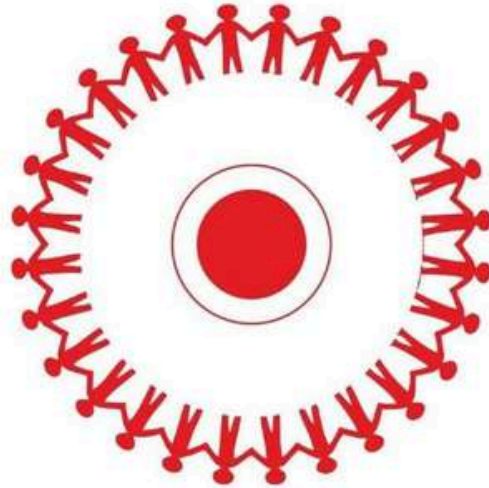
Book Review

The People in Our Lives: Everyday Psychology by Dr. Gagandeep Kaur

BY SAMEER GUDHATE



THE PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES



Everyday Psychology

Dr Gagandeep Kaur

Have you ever found yourself questioning the deeper meaning of life? The reasons behind our relationships, our struggles, or even the way we respond to joy and sorrow? If so, *The People in Our Lives: Everyday Psychology* by Dr. Gagandeep Kaur might just be the book you've been waiting for. It's one of those books that doesn't just sit on your shelf collecting dust. It grabs you, makes you think, and challenges the way you see the world.

Dr. Kaur, with her medical background, brings a unique perspective to psychology, blending it with the spiritual journey we're all on. It's not her first book, but it feels like something different—a heartfelt exploration of human nature, relationships, and the things that truly matter in life.

In *The People in Our Lives*, Dr. Kaur takes us on a journey through the cyclical nature of existence, touching on the big questions we all face—life, death, and the in-between. The book isn't about offering easy answers but encouraging us to reflect on what really gives our lives meaning. She ties together psychological principles with spiritual themes like karma, reincarnation, and the soul's journey, all while focusing on one central idea: the importance of our relationships. What sets this book apart is its balance between the intellectual and the personal. Dr. Kaur doesn't just explore human behavior through the clinical lens of psychology. Instead, she connects it to real-life experiences—our relationships, our growth, and our struggles—making it both thought-provoking and deeply relatable. It's like sitting down with a wise friend who has lived through a lot, sharing insights about how to live a more fulfilled life.

One of the things I loved about Dr. Kaur's writing is how approachable it feels. Her background in medicine doesn't weigh down the prose with jargon or heavy theories. Instead, she writes in a way that feels personal and authentic, like she's speaking directly to you. It's clear she has a deep understanding of human psychology, but she explains complex ideas in a way that's easy to digest. She's got this beautiful mix of clarity and depth. The book is structured in a way that allows you to take in one idea at a time, without feeling overwhelmed. But at the same time, there's a richness to the content that keeps you coming back for more. It's one of those books that you can't rush through—you'll want to pause and reflect after every chapter.

While this book doesn't revolve around traditional characters, Dr. Kaur's exploration of human nature is where the real depth lies. She doesn't just analyze individual behaviors; she examines the stages of human development, personality traits, and how our psychological makeup influences the way we interact with others. It's a reminder that we are all constantly evolving, and that growth happens in layers. The big idea here is that we don't exist in a vacuum. Relationships, no matter how big or small, shape who we are. And the way we engage with others—our families, our friends, and even strangers—has a huge impact on our sense of fulfillment. It's a message that rings true no matter where you are in life, and it's one I think we can all relate to. Now, this book isn't exactly a page-turner in the traditional sense. It's not about plot twists or dramatic climaxes. But that's not the point. The pacing is slow and steady, much like life itself. Dr. Kaur sets up each concept thoughtfully, giving you the space to really think about it before moving on to the next.

The structure allows the reader to dive deep into each theme, reflecting on their own experiences and drawing connections between the book and their own life. In that way, the book becomes an experience, not just a story to follow. The themes of *The People in Our Lives* resonate long after you finish reading. Dr. Kaur invites us to reflect on life's uncertainties, to find meaning in relationships, and to live with intention. But perhaps the most powerful message of the book is about embracing life as it is—full of challenges, surprises, and growth.

It's a reminder that we don't have to have everything figured out, and that every part

of the journey—whether it's joyful or painful—is part of the bigger picture. There's a certain comfort in knowing that life's unpredictability is just another way of growing, evolving, and connecting with others. Reading this book felt like taking a breath of fresh air. There were moments that made me pause and reflect, especially when Dr. Kaur delves into our human need for connection and understanding.

It's not just an intellectual exercise—it's an emotional one. You feel something shift inside you as you read. Whether it's a better understanding of yourself or a new perspective on the people in your life, it's the kind of book that stays with you. There are a few moments where Dr. Kaur's reflections on karma and life's cyclical nature really hit home, making you think about the choices you make and the relationships you nurture.

One of the biggest strengths of this book is its ability to mix psychology and spirituality without feeling preachy or overly complex. It's an honest, no-nonsense approach to self-discovery, and Dr. Kaur's writing style makes it easy to connect with. It's not just a book you read—it's one that encourages you to live differently, to see the world through a more compassionate and intentional lens. If I'm being picky, I'd say the book might not be for everyone. It's a bit introspective and philosophical, so if you're looking for a fast-paced, action-packed read, this might not be your thing. But for anyone open to deep reflection, it's absolutely worth the read.

I found *The People in Our Lives* to be incredibly refreshing. It's the kind of book that invites you to slow down and really think about life's big questions. Dr. Kaur's insights felt like a gentle nudge to look inward and examine how we live, how we connect, and how we grow. It's a book that's both thought-provoking and comforting—exactly what I needed.

All in all, *The People in Our Lives* is an insightful and deeply moving exploration of the human experience. Dr. Kaur's unique perspective and approachable writing make it a standout in the genre of psychological and spiritual reflection. If you're looking for a book that will make you think, reflect, and ultimately change the way you view relationships and life itself, this is definitely one to pick up. Highly recommended. And I can't wait to see what Dr. Gagandeep Kaur writes next!



Sameer Gudhate is a poet, author, and proud book lover whose passion for words led him to achieve a world record: reviewing 365 books in 365 days. His writings, filled with heart and insight, have found a place in national and international journals, newspapers, and anthologies. A basketball enthusiast and a hands-on dad, Sameer is on a mission to spark his daughter's love for reading. Whether he's penning poetry or simply connecting with fellow bookworms, Sameer brings warmth, authenticity, and a deep love for storytelling to everything he does. He can be contacted on [9820270247](tel:9820270247)/samgudhate@gmail.com

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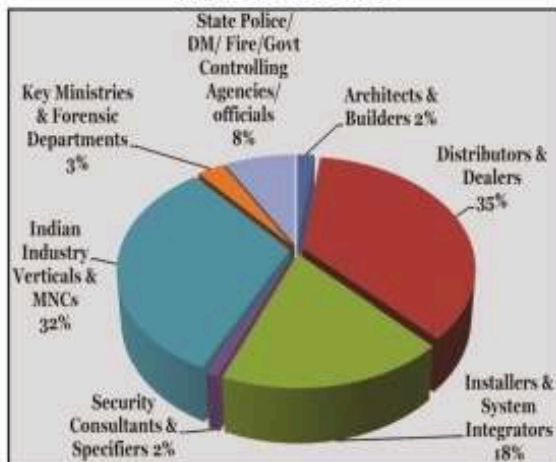
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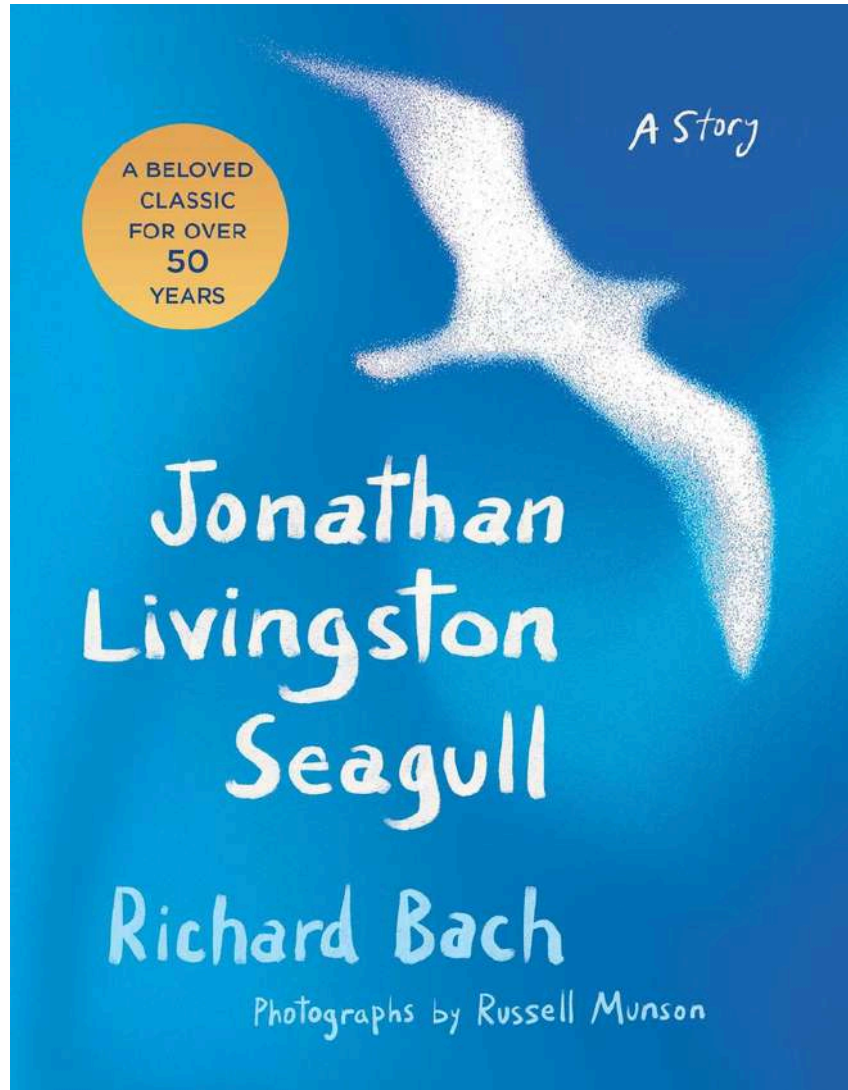
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Book Review

Jonathan Livingston Seagull

BY ARYAMAN KASHYAP



About the Author:

Richard Bach is an American writer, born on June 23, 1936, he has written many flight-related works of fiction and non-fiction. His works include Jonathan Livingston Seagull[1970]and ILLUSIONS: The adventures of a reluctant messiah[1977], both of which were among the 1970's bestsellers.



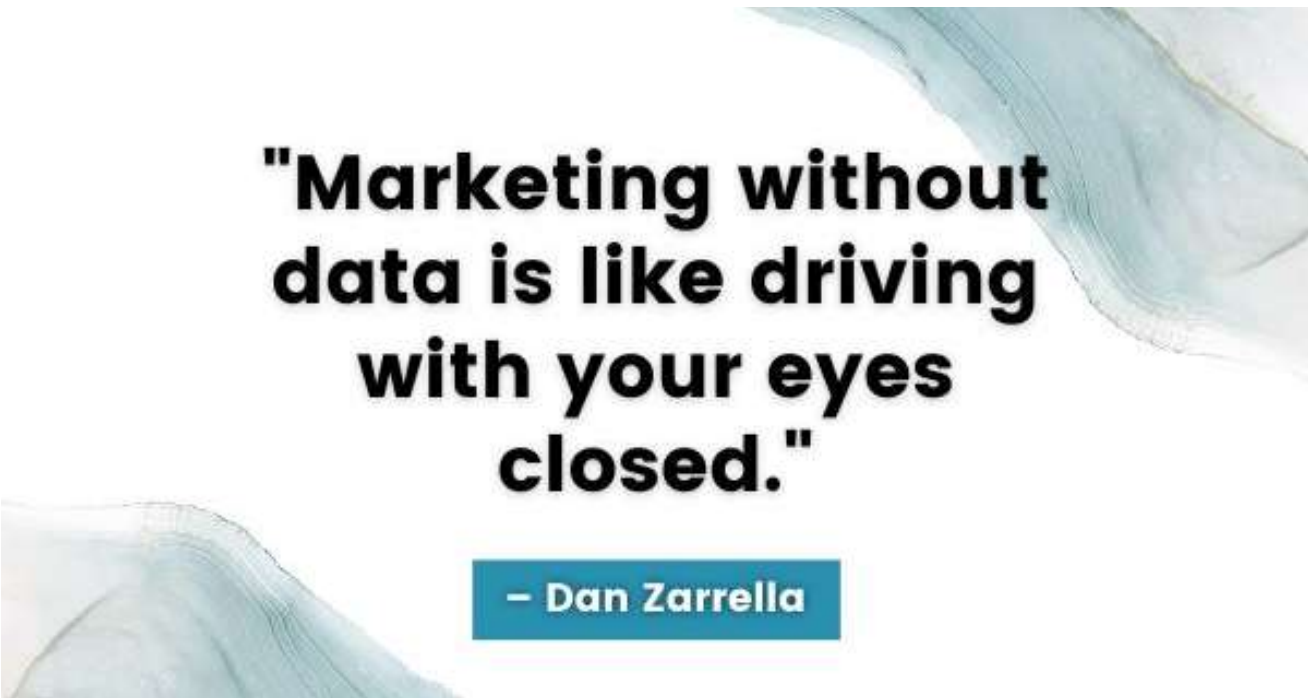
The book Jonathan Livingston Seagull is a 4- part fable by Richard Bach. The book inspires us to be unique and not to blend in with others, be brave enough to be bad at something you're learning newly. He [Jonathan] sets a record of diving at a whopping 273 mph, that's past terminal velocity! He then gets some students of his own, but the special one is a seagull named Fletcher Lynd, but when Jonathan gets too good he disappears from Earth and goes to Heaven. Then his student Fletcher becomes a teacher like Jonathan. Then his students become teachers and it goes in a chain. Then one kid doesn't believe in Jonathan. Until he returns to Earth from Heaven. The book is very inspiring and beautifully written.



Honorable mention: Capt Uday K Shriwas

Hello I am Aryaman Kashyap and presently studying in class IV in Bishops School Camp, Pune. Reading has been a wonderful time and it has been a great indulgence. Football and Cricket are my favorite sports and Messi to me is GOAT. Well I have also seen the Movie 83hmm Let me Guess... 50 times 😊.

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"Marketing without data is like driving with your eyes closed."

- Dan Zarrella



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