

Editorial

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to all our readers the USI Journal for the 3rd Quarter of the year 2021. This issue puts together a number of articles on national security, military history, and international affairs.

The issue starts off with the 2nd prize winning essay for the year 2020 of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition Group 'B', on 'Space the Next Frontier: Opportunities and Challenges for India'. This was written by Commander Pankaj Grover of the Indian Navy.

The following article is 'The Purple Path Ahead is full of Expectations and Opportunities' by Lieutenant General PS Rajeshwar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd). Having held the joint Services office of CISC, his views are insightful and need reflection. For some time now, the doctrinal aspects of India's involvement in UN Peacekeeping missions have been somewhat neglected in the public discourse. To bring the spotlight back, the USI of India, along with the ICWA, has started a series of webinars with international partners to learn from the Indian experiences and imbibe experiences from others. Major General (Dr) AK Bardalai (Retd) who is involved in this initiative writes on 'Challenges to UN Peacebuilding'.

Military history is one field in which the USI has an untrammelled lead on account of its 151-year heritage and a library with a priceless collection of rare books. We have two articles in this journal dealing with military history. In one, we have a rare comparison of two opposing commanders of the 1857 War of Independence, titled 'Rani Lakshmi Bai and Major General Hugh Rose: A Comparative Analysis' by Major General (Dr) RS Thakur (Retd) and Colonel Nikhil Kapoor. The British called it the Great Mutiny. It may have started off as a mutiny by soldiers whose cultural aversions were not understood by the British, but as the mutiny spread, it fanned the embers of the desire to throw off the British yoke. The other military history article is of post-independence times by Major General VK Singh (Retd), an

acknowledged historian, who writes on 'Corrupting India's Military History – A Dangerous Trend' with the example of the 1967 Sino-Indian clash at Nathu La and Cho La in Sikkim. Military history is written with two diverse aims; one is to chronicle facts and learn lessons, the other is to record deeds to motivate. In the fog of war, fast paced events, and regimental loyalties, truth is often distorted. It is for the historians to put incomplete facts together and join the dots. Major General VK Singh conveys this very ably. On this note, it is worthwhile to mention that in recent years a valuable resource to join the dots for historians is access to the casualty lists on the National War Memorial website which gives a fair picture of how thickly in action a unit was.

The next two articles deal with the use of technology in war. These are 'Cyber Defence — India's Critical Infrastructure' by Commander K Ashok Menon (Retd) and 'Emergence of Drone Warfare and Implications for India' by Brigadier Kulbhushan Bhardwaj. Both articles carry important information, lessons, and recommendations in preparing for future wars.

This journal carries the last article of the trilogy regarding the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) by Major General Ashok Kumar, VSM who writes on the 'Veteran Medical Care Support System in the USA'. It is good to learn from the experience of others and his recommendations can give direction to reduce some of the shortcomings of the ECHS and further refine 'veteran medical care' in India. General Sherman of the American civil war fame had rightly said that "War is hell". Those whose loved ones die or are incapacitated know the real cost of war. There are many who pick up their threads and try to bring succour and relief to the next of kin of war casualties. The next article, 'Research & Advocacy to Address Issues Faced by Families of Armed Forces Soldiers Killed in Action (KIA)' by three such stalwarts Mrs Meghna Girish, Mrs Subhashini Vasanth & Mr Vikas Manhas is an eye opener. They bring out lot of very pertinent points which we hope, through the medium of this journal, will see some fruition.

The promotion policies and the promotion system often cause angst not only in the army, or the armed forces, but in any organisation. In the article 'Promotion Policy in the Armed Forces:

Time for Full Transparency’, the author Colonel PK Chaudhary writes with no recrimination about what in his view ails the system and how it can be made more transparent. Constructive criticism is always good, and this article should be read in that spirit by policy makers. It may even bring out some more constructive ideas from our readers. In the penultimate article titled ‘Stay “absolutely loyal, absolutely pure”: Xi’s Memoires to the PLA’, Ms Mrityika Guha Sarkar argues that Xi Jinping has aimed to utilise the military as a tool to further his agendas and, in that backdrop, analyses what has the CCP’s 100th anniversary meant for the CCP-PLA as well as Xi-PLA relations.

The final article of this issue is ‘India-US Partnership in Afghanistan: Challenges Ahead for India, by Shri Gaurav Kumar. This has been a much-debated subject after the astounding victory of the Taliban. While their victory was a foregone conclusion after the Doha agreement of Feb 2022, its speed was not foreseen and hence, the subject will remain relevant for some time till a clearer picture of the power play in Afghanistan emerges.

In the Review Article, Dr MR Anand, IES (Retd) writes about the book ‘India’s China Challenge: A Journey through China’s Rise and What It Means for India’ by Ananth Krishnan. He highlights that the objective of the book is to examine the transformation that has taken place in China and if India has to have a better grasp of her neighbour, there is a need to invest more efforts and attention in understanding the developments in China.

The issue also carries four short reviews of the following books:

- The Saga of a Braveheart: Lt Col Ajit V Bhandarkar Shaurya Chakra. By Mrs Shakunthala A Bhandarkar
Reviewed by Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)
- Irrawaddy Imperatives: Reviewing India’s Myanmar Strategy
By Jaideep Chanda
Reviewed by Shri Gaurav Kumar
- Manthan: Multifaceted Reflections on the Indian Armed Forces
By Major General VK Shrivastava, VSM
Reviewed by Ms Samriddhi Roy

- Law of Armed Conflict: Application and Practice
By Major General (Prof) Nilendra Kumar
Reviewed by Wg Cdr UC Jha (Retd)

We look forward to your feedback and suggestions which could be put on the USI blog and which we will carry as letters to the editor – a format which is not adequately used by our readers. As always, the USI Journal will attempt to maintain our standards of inquisitive and fruitful research and original writing by established as well as budding writers.

Happy Reading!

The Editorial Team

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