

A Chapter in Tri-Service Camaraderie: INS Teg Affiliation with the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment

Introduction

In the Indian Armed forces, the first recorded instance of jointmanship took place in the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war. Although, all services suffered severe scarcity of equipment, logistics and support, the spirit to fight and win was indomitable. Throughout the history of operations conducted by Indian Armed Forces, jointmanship has always come to the fore in complex operations and have yielded deadly blows to the enemy. Jointmanship is the key to successful covert as well as conventional operations in the present realm and understanding this is of essence towards making India a formidable superpower. The Indian Navy is a force to reckon with which has delivered credible offensive and defensive results and has always pitched for jointmanship. Thus, affiliation of Indian Naval units with Indian Army units has been instituted to move small but effective steps forward to achieve goals of the country as a whole. In order to bolster solidarity, *esprit-de-corps* (the proud and comfortable feeling that you are a member of a group) and increase interaction, the process of affiliation began between Indian Naval and Indian Army units.

INS Teg and Sikh Light Infantry Regiment

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Teg is Indian Navy's frontline warship, packed with arsenal ranging from Cruise missiles to surface-to-air-missiles and a seamless capability to single handedly take on capabilities of enemy ships, submarines and aircrafts. Commissioned in 2012 in Kaliningrad, Russia, the ship is a marvel of Russian shipbuilding integrated with indigenous weapons and sensors recently. The ship has a proud history of major operational deployments viz., Op Cross bow, Op Cross Hair, multiple Gulf patrol duties, Indian Ocean Region patrol as well as surveillance operations in hostile waters. The ship was awarded Chief of Naval Staff unit citation in 2023 to acknowledge its stellar role in evacuation of Indians from war torn Sudan as well as recovery of huge drug cache worth INR 2,500 billion, highest ever recorded in Indian history.



Lt Gen DP Pandey, Commandant Army War College and Colonel of The Sikh Light Infantry Regiment and officers from the SIKH LI interacted with officers and sailors of INS Teg, to further enhance jointmanship between two services. (22 Jan 2023)

The Sikh Light Infantry (LI) is one of the finest regiments of the Indian Army. The regiment has inherited the battle honours, regimental colours and traditions from the Corps of Sikh Pioneers. The regiments history has been forged with valour, blood and victory. Affiliation to such a proudly decorated regiment remains an honour for INS Teg and fills our hearts with pride. INS Teg, was affiliated to Sikh LI Regiment, on 20 Jun 13, in a solemn ceremony held onboard INS Teg at Naval Dockyard Mumbai. The Charter of Affiliation was signed by Brigadier AS Rawat, SM, VSM, Commandant of the Sikh LI Centre and Captain Rakesh Kumar Dahiya, Commanding Officer of INS Teg, in the presence of General Bikram Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC, then Chief of the Army Staff and Colonel of the Sikh LI Regiment, Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, PVSM, AVSM, NM**, ADC, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command and Rear Admiral AR Karve, AVSM, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet.

The significance and the consequence of this step has opened doors for numerous prospects and synergy. The affiliation has generated a sense of camaraderie and has enabled regular communication between the senior leadership of the two units. The motto of the Sikh LI is *Deg Teg Fateh* which means prosperity in peace and victory in war, the same has been

institutionalised as the ships war cry. *Tegitself* means the short rapier used by Sikh warriors of the past. Till now the affiliation has brought greater interaction and cooperation between the two units. On numerous occasions Officers and men from both units have visited and participated in various ceremonial as well as operational exercises.

Mutual Interactions

The ship has invited officers and Personnel Below Officer Ranks (PBOR) from Sikh LI Infantry regiments to participate in Naval operational exercises as well as Overseas Deployments to acclimatise them to the Naval way of life and operations. Major operational exercises of INS Teg which witnessed embarkation of Officers and PBORs include Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX-13), Sikh LI Day at sea in 2014, Officer on Special Duty to East Africa (2014), Exercise Naseem Al Bahar (2017), President's Fleet Review (2021), Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (2023).

Sikh LI regiment has also extended invitations to INS Teg on numerous occasions in a very friendly manner which has fostered interaction. Major events in which ship's officers and sailors participated include Gold Jubilee Celebrations of 7 Sikh LI at Udaipur (2014), Platinum Jubilee Celebration at Fatehgarh (2017), 55th Raising Day Celebrations at Ambala (2020), Regimental lunch at New Delhi (2020), 47th Raising Day of 12 Sikh LI at Kota (2022), Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of 7 Sikh LI at Pathankot (2024).



Author attending the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

In addition, senior officers of the regiment viz., General Manoj Mukund Naravane, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC, Chief of Army Staff and Col of the Sikh LI Regiment, Lieutenant General Devraj Anbu, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, ADC and Lieutenant General DP Pandey, UYSM, AVSM, VSM have visited the ship at occasions in affiliation history of last 10 years. One of the ship's sailors also visited Patiala in 2023 and paid solemn homage to martyrs of Operation 'Garol' at Anantnag on behalf of the ship.



Author with General Naravane

The friendship and mutual understanding created during above interactions has kept the ship and the regiment in close unison and both sides look forward to do their best to continue achieving synergy in the limited time available out of the operational exercises.

Further Reflections

Warfare in today's scenario is complex with major asymmetric elements. With experience of interaction with army units, it has definitely to be acknowledged that theaterisation is a well thought of concept. In an Infantry battalion, the sole element of the combat capability is the soldier, around which all support systems and tactics are employed. The physical capabilities augmented with technology and support arms are the key enablers to win a conflict. Whereas in

the navy, it all boils down to the superior technology, firepower and endurance of the ship. While the interactions foster synergy and is a step in right direction, the frequency of cross trainings and fielding of naval elements in army's operations and vice-versa has to increase to toss actual dimensional surprises at the enemy. Jointmanship and cooperative engagement are the key enablers for victory in this emerging nature of warfare and jointness is the bedrock for success in Amphibious Operations, Contingencies, Emergencies, out of area operations and national disasters. Affiliations between Indian Navy and Indian Army units are likely to increase in future and it is also surmised that theaterisation will further become a key enabler in growth of interaction.

Lieutenant Commander Yashkaran Manrai is a 3rd generation officer. The officer is a graduate from Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala and has performed watchkeeping duties onboard Indian Naval Ships (INS) Kolkata followed by Surface to Air Missile Controlling Officer onboard INS Teg. The officer's father is presently serving in the 5 Sikh Regiment currently posted at Chandimandir. The officer is scheduled to undergo Long Gunnery Staff Course at INS Dronacharya commencing May 2024.

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