

Editorial

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to our readers the USI Journal for the 2nd Quarter of the year 2023. For 153 years, the USI has chronicled military affairs, encouraged and inculcated the love for writing and reading in the officers of the armed forces and, most importantly, spread the knowledge among its readers. There are 11 well researched articles, a book review article and four short reviews of recent books in this issue.

Disruptive technology has emerged as the key driver in transforming the conduct of modern-day warfare. So, in the first article, 'Changing Nature of Limited Wars : Impact of Technology and Ramifications' written by Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM & Bar (Retd), the author argues that the wars of 21st century may take multiple forms wherein, a soldier will be equipped to fight as entity-optimising the man-machine interface. India has to be fully prepared with techno savvy armed forces to fight and win the future 'hybrid-high tech' limited wars.

The second article titled 'Voices from the Prison: Indian Soldiers in German Prisoners of War Camp, 1915-1918' is written by Dr Narender Yadav. The article seeks to study the voices of Indian soldiers recorded during their internment at a POW camp in Germany during World War I. These voices were recorded between 1915 and 1918 by researchers of 'Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission' with an aim to study different languages for phonetics, dialects, and linguistics purposes. The next article titled 'The Corps of Madras Pioneers' is written by Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd). Pioneers have been defined as the men who lead the way and ahead to prepare the way for others. The Madras Pioneers were the first fighting force raised by the British in India, in 1780. The article covers the brief history of the Corps of Madras Pioneers highlighting the prominent role the pioneer regiments played in several campaigns as well as in many construction projects.

The next article titled 'Grooming of Military Officers for Joint Services Environment' is an edited version of the first prize winning

entry of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2022. Written by Commander M Arun Chakravarthy, the article brings out how the Indian Armed Forces need to harness and harvest assets jointly to fight future wars, which are increasingly becoming divergent in character. This article identifies the existing fault lines and provides a roadmap for grooming and shaping future military leaders to thrive in a joint ecosystem. This is followed by an article by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd), titled 'Ukraine: A Land Crossed by Empires'. He highlights the root cause of the current crisis by diving into the history of the land called Ukraine and points to the existing and emerging fault lines between Russia and Ukraine.

China's Himalayan ambitions are nuanced and precariously balanced between its neighbourhood outreach and national security ambitions. The article titled 'China's Himalayan Strategy: Between Handshakes and Tug-of-War', by Dr Jagannath Panda, looks into the trajectory of China's Himalayan strategy, what constitutes it and what are the implications? The next article, 'Re-imagining MRO for Defence: Realistically Leveraging Technology' by Lieutenant General KK Aggarwal, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd), analyses a couple of major triggers which have emerged over the last few years and emphasises that now is the time for transformative changes in the Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) set up in the Indian Defence Forces, incremental changes will not suffice.

The execution of the airborne operation at Poongli Bridge, in the vicinity of Tangail, in what was then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), on 11 December 1971 is considered the golden chapter in the history of the Indian Army. The article 'Fifty Years after India's First Airborne Operation at Poongli Bridge, Tangail: What we know of its Planning?' (Part-1), written by Lieutenant Colonel RS Bangari provides insight into the planning process of the airborne operation at Poongli Bridge, along with its execution, to achieve the desired objectives. The article is in two parts and Part-2 shall be covered in the next issue of the USI Journal.

The next article titled 'FDI in Defence Sector: Re-shaping India's Military Industrial Complex', jointly written by Dr Sanjay Kumar and Group Captain (Dr) Rajesh Kumar Singh (Retd),

examines the changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector, how it is reshaping India's Military Industrial Complex and the positive framework for foreign investors to invest in India. This is followed by an article, 'Afghanistan under Taliban 2.0: Strategic Trends and Trajectories' written by Dr J Jeganaathan. The author here examines the emerging strategic and security trends and trajectories in Afghanistan post-Taliban takeover and how they impinge on India's national security.

The last article of this Journal is 'Civil Military Fusion for National Security' by Lieutenant Colonel Saumya Ghatak. The article highlights how Civil-Military Fusion (CMF) can optimise the use of civil and military resources to achieve national objectives, proposes few recommendations to increase and synergise CMF at national level and be part of National Strategy.

This is followed with a Review Article where, Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) writes about the book 'The Fighting Fourth – A Personal Narrative of the History of 4 KUMAON' by Brig Jasbir Singh, SM. The reviewer writes that the book is remarkable as it presents a personal account of the glorious history of the battalion written by someone who has had a ring side view of its ethos and this is a narrative that needs to be read for the manner it portrays the character of this famous battalion and its contribution over the centuries.

This issue also carries short reviews of the following books:

- G20 @ 2023: The Roadmap to Indian Presidency
By V Srinivas
Reviewed by Dr Rajan Katoch, IAS (Retd)
- The Military Heroes of Haryana – Gallantry Award Winners, Volume 1
By Lt Col Dilbag Singh Dabas (Retd)
Reviewed by Ms Surbhi Chakraborty
- War to Peace Wisdom and Leadership: Ex-Servicemen's Role in Good Governance and Rural Development
By Lt Gen (Dr) SK Gadeock, AVSM (Retd)
Reviewed by Dr Aparajita Pandey

- Two Decades of US-Taliban War in Afghanistan
By Major General Samay Ram, UYSM, AVSM, VSM
Reviewed by Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)

As always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions.
The USI acknowledges the financial assistance received from the
ICSSR for publication of this Journal.

Happy Reading!

Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)
Director Editorial