

Review Article & Book Reviews

The Fighting Fourth: A Personal Narrative of the History of 4 KUMAON*

Brig Jasbir Singh, SM

Introduction

Amongst the most highly decorated and illustrious battalions of the Indian Army is 4 KUMAON or 'Fighting Fourth'. Major Somnath Sharma of the battalion was awarded the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) in 1947 for his exceptional bravery. During this conflict, the unit also won three Maha Vir Chakras (MVC), including one to their Commanding Officer (CO), Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) MM Khanna, who led the battalion from the front and was a highly distinguished soldier and exemplary leader. They also have the unique honour of having two Chiefs who served in the battalion namely, General SM Shrinagesh and General KS Thimayya. Raised in 1788, its rich and enviable history traces its roots to being part of Salabat Khan's Army in the Deccan; they were also the first troops to be inducted into Siachen.

The Book

'The Fighting Fourth' is a personal narrative of the history of this battalion from its raising in 1788 to maintain order in Berar and protect the Northern borders of the Princely State of Hyderabad till its bicentenary in 1988. Written by the Late Brigadier Jasbir Singh, SM, who was inspired to write this account when his father, Brigadier Balbir Singh, MC told him that "They were the only father and son duo in the unit's history to have been awarded for gallantry".

The battalion fought in diverse terrain and conflicts over the two hundred years of its history, but what stands out is the manner in which they have always responded even in the most adverse circumstances. The first known action fought by the battalion was the 'Battle of Moormoosa' on the banks of the Godavari in 1814 during the Pindari Wars where they lost their Commanding Officer Major Drew.

*The Fighting Fourth: A Personal Narrative of the History of 4 KUMAON. By Brig Jasbir Singh, SM; (Noida: Occam (An imprint of BluOne Ink) September 2021); Pages: 216; Price: Rs 525/-; ISBN: 8194954754.

In 1900, the battalion proceeded by train for the first time from Hyderabad to Madras; 'where the clickety clack of the wheels fascinated the men who had been used to slow marches'. From Madras, they went by ship to Hong Kong and, thereafter, were part of the China Expeditionary Force to crush the Boxer Rebellion. Incidentally, the German contingent of this Force had Lieutenant Lettow-Vorbeck, who would command the German and Askiri Forces in East Africa in World War I and fight bitter battles against the battalion. The 'China Cup', an intricate silver trophy prepared by Chinese craftsmen, still adorns the Officers Mess.

In 1914 during The Great War, the unit was part of the Africa Expeditionary Force 'B' and sailed to Mombassa eating 'unpalatable food' during the voyage, where after a brief stay, when they were not allowed to disembark, they then landed at Tanga. Here the Germans bought time to build up their defences by deceiving the British that the harbour was mined. The battalion then fought a difficult battle at Tanga, where they were not only defeated by the Germans and Askiris but also attacked by Bees, suffering seventy-seven casualties, including thirty-seven killed and excluding four missing, as a result of 'ineffective leadership by the 'British Higher Command'. The unit, thereafter, fought in Lake Victoria, where it won acclaim for the 'impressive operations and great gallantry'. The soldiers had proved their 'mettle in battle', their 'bravery is considered more impressive as the fighting occurred in distant lands far removed from their homeland. On return to India, they were part of the Third Afghan War in 1917 where their CO was awarded a bar to his Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

Earning a well-deserved rest in India after a long operational service, the battalion moved to Iraq in 1927. This is where Second Lieutenant KS Thimayya joined the battalion on commissioning. In 1932, while at Allahabad, 'Indianisation' progressed further and a large number of Kings Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs) were present in the unit including Captain SM Shrinagesh and Second Lieutenant K Bahadur Singh. Incidentally, this is where the senior most Indian officer, Captain Daulet Sen had to 'sadly leave the Army for demanding that 'Indian dishes be cooked in the Officers Mess'.

In August 1939, the battalion sailed to Singapore which was supposed to be a 'peace time posting'. However, soon they were

fighting a series of actions against the Japanese in the jungles of Malaysia from 09 December 1941, at Ketereh, where in their first encounter they were able to hold their positions and then they fought a rear-guard action at Machung where a Company was left stranded across the Kelantan River when the bridge was demolished. However, what stands out is the CO crossing the river to instil confidence in his troops. Though they lost many men, the gallant action by the battalion amidst the chaos of withdrawal stood out. The unit's determined actions during the withdrawal from Malaysia, following the Battle of Slim River, and last stand at Singapore on 14 February 1942 were testimonial of their training and fighting spirit. All that remained at the time of surrender were three officers and 180 men.

The author then covers the story of the escape from the Prisoner of War (POW) camp in May 1942, by his father, (then) Captain Balbir Singh, Captain GS Parab, and Captain Pritam Singh. They endured extreme hardship going through Malaysia, Thailand, and the trek through the jungles of Burma to finally reach India. All three were decorated with the Military Cross. Later Brigadier Pritam Singh would go on to be the saviour of Poonch in 1947-48. The ordeal they underwent and the difficulties they faced are remarkably illustrated.

In 1947-48, the battalion fought in J&K where the stand by Major Somnath Sharma, who was awarded the PVC, is well documented. It is in this conflict that Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) MM Khanna, the CO, with his group of fifteen, was ambushed, losing one JCO and twelve men on 19 June 1948 and it was a Kashmiri villager, Jumma Mohammed, who carried the wounded and hid them while he went to inform the nearest army unit, 2 DOGRA. Khanna was awarded the MVC for showing great bravery and determination.

What is also wonderfully captured is the daring patrol in early 1957, which has generally remained highly classified, undertaken by Lieutenant Colonel RS Basera into Aksai Chin to find out about the strategic Sinkiang – Tibet Road. In adverse conditions, overcoming all odds the patrol reached the road, observed Chinese vehicles and took samples of the track. Unfortunately, while the military hierarchy was appreciative of the task undertaken, the then Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, and Prime Minister Nehru,

both of whom were apprised about the report, 'wanted to know if a map had been carried to confirm the location'. Naturally, no map could be carried for security reasons, and they directed that "no more such patrols were to be sent to Aksai Chin". The strategic picture would have been very different if the report had been trusted by the then political hierarchy.

The book also gives an insight into the character qualities of Brigadier Nasim Arthur Salick, who won his Vir Chakra (VrC) at "Master" in J&K in January 1948, and later commanded the battalion during the 'Battle of Bugina Bulge' in north Kashmir in 1965. Here the battalion was involved in a series of actions where they overcame great odds of terrain, enemy, and extreme weather conditions to successfully capture and push back the Pakistanis in the area beyond Tangdhar, in a region known as Bugina Bulge. It was a significant achievement as the Pakistani regular and Special Forces troops were in reinforced positions, at dominating heights including Point 9013 (named due to its altitude in feet). The hill was subsequently renamed as 'Kumaon Hill'. His inspiration, motivation, courage, and personal example were some of the contributing factors to the battalion's spectacular success, along with his outstanding team of officers, JCO's, and soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel Salick stood out as a true leader who lived by a set of values and beliefs he wanted his men to emulate. The battalion lost two officers, three JCOs, and forty-five other ranks in the 1965 war. Unfortunately, he never got the MVC, which the Brigade wanted to recommend him for, as he refused to reduce the number of citations for his men saying, "If my men are not recommended for the gallantry awards, they so richly deserve, Sir I do not deserve an award".

The Author

Brigadier Jasbir Singh, SM was commissioned into the battalion in December 1970, when he was yet not twenty, and joined the unit in Nagaland. He was soon involved in actions against Naga insurgents and these have been covered in great detail. The battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Lakha Singh and Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) DPS Raghuvanshi did exceedingly well, killing twenty-two insurgents, wounding twenty-three, and capturing over six hundred and won twelve gallantry awards. Second Lieutenant Jasbir Singh was in the thick of many

encounters and his courage, determination, initiative, and leadership stood out. He was awarded the Sena Medal (SM) for his actions in February 1972 while eliminating self-styled Lieutenant Pusato. Apart from this, there are anecdotes that cover his time in the battalion including his 'Dining in' and the unit Raising Day. The 'Dining In' includes the tale of him telling the CO that he had already signed the 'visitors book' while being a cadet at RIMC, when he visited the unit at Treggham, J&K, along with his father in January 1965 and the privilege was accorded to him by the then CO. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Salick permitted him to sign the visitors book provided he joined 4 KUMAON.

In 1971, the battalion was part of 8 Mountain Division and operated behind enemy lines by establishing a road block on 29 November 1971 at Shamsheer Nagar to isolate it and prevent it from being reinforced. It is during the firefight here that they lost Havildar Hari Shankar, whose son, born after he passed away, followed his father's footsteps and joined the battalion. In the road block action, they lost twenty-one men and thirty-two were wounded. For 'the outstanding operations' during the 1971 War, the unit was awarded the 'Battle Honour Shamsheer Nagar'.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that late Brigadier Jasbir Singh has captured the soul and the spirit of the battalion due to his insight with them over the years. 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. There is no doubt that the strongest bonds are created by the unique sense of esprit de corps that prevails, which overcomes all challenges, and it is this intrinsic strength of our army that needs to be nurtured. 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.

Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

G20 @ 2023: The Roadmap to Indian Presidency. *By V Srinivas; (New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, March 2023); Pages: 304; Price: Rs 995/-; ISBN: 9390095743.*

The Group of Twenty, better known by its acronym G20, is an intergovernmental forum of the world's largest economies originally set up in 1999 to address challenges and coordinate action on pressing global financial and economic issues. Annual summits of the leaders of the G20 countries have been regularly held every year since 2008. Over the years, it has evolved into a major force often setting the direction of decision-making by established multilateral institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and United Nations. The year 2023 is special for India as it is the year of India's Presidency of this global forum, with sectoral discussions being held over the year in each State of the country, and the annual summit of world leaders to be held in Delhi in September 2023. In this context, a book that seeks to highlight the background and build understanding of the significance of this event is welcome.

V Srinivas' deeply researched book 'G20 @ 2023: The Roadmap to Indian Presidency' comprehensively sets out the evolution of the G20 from its inception in 2008 to its present position as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. The author is a notable scholar-administrator who has closely worked with top political levels in the Government of India. Further, he has a deep understanding of the multilateral process, having worked at a policy level in a multilateral financial institution, and written extensively on multilateralism. This background gives him a unique perspective that is reflected throughout this seminal work.

The book traces, step by step, the expansion of the scope of the G20 meetings over the years. The happenings at the key Summits held are analysed in considerable depth. The book highlights the stellar role played by the G20 in actively responding and successfully tackling severe global financial crises, most notably the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. The forum's leading role in coordinating the response to the Eurozone Crisis of 2010 and the Covid 19 Pandemic of 2020 is set out lucidly. The book contains a wealth of useful documentation and perspectives that provide useful insights into the decision-making processes of G20 and on the complex workings of multilateralism in practice.

In this aptly titled 'Roadmap', the author brings out India's approach and perspective to the presidency of this key global forum. The book sets out the reform agenda for the forum, and the initiatives that are likely to define India's presidency of the G20. In a currently divided and increasingly multipolar world, he brings out how India's presidency is being viewed as a great opportunity to guide the global order towards strengthening multilateralism and also to nudge the global powers towards processes that facilitate more consultative and inclusive global policy making.

India's presidency of the G20 is being widely covered and is the subject of much media and popular attention. In this backdrop, the book is an invaluable reference not just for scholars/academics but is also extremely relevant and highly recommended for anyone, even remotely, interested in the background and the profusion of happenings related to the crucial Indian presidency of G20. For those directly or indirectly associated with the G20 process in any capacity, this book is an essential reading.

Dr Rajan Katoch, IAS (Retd)

The Military Heroes of Haryana – Gallantry Award Winners, Volume 1. By Lt Col Dilbag Singh Dabas (Retd); (New Delhi: Rolleract Press Services); Pages: 387; Price: Rs 950/-; ISBN: 9789355262622.

India is a representation of many cultural, religious, linguistic and social structures, it is home to 1/3rd of the world population, and has been known for being one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is also the oldest civilisation in the world, with rich cultural heritage, attributed to its many States. As a country surrounded by the Great Himalayas to the north, Bay of Bengal to the east, Arabian Sea to the west, and the Indian Ocean to the south, even its geographical boundaries are an amalgamation of its regional differences. One such organisation exhibiting a similar structure is its land force, the Indian Army.

If we look closely, the Indian Army is symbolic of India and its States where each regiment embodies the cultural, and ethical values the respective State holds. The Infantry regiments today are based on the pre-independent 'Martial Race' concept that divided the fighting class from the non-fighting class and, hence,

these infantry units came to be known as Punjab, Madras, Rajput, Jat, Sikh, Dogra, Garhwal, Kumaon, Assam, Mahar, and Gorkha Regiment, that exemplifies co-existence and assimilation of values of each other's culture. In the spirit of unity and valour that our brave men have proved time and again, the author has specifically written about the fallen heroes of Haryana. A land known for its abundant agricultural and historical battle tales. Open sources cite that almost 1/4th of total soldiers belong to the – Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh belt. Haryana, specifically, accounts for 5.7 per cent of rank and file with a total tally of 65,987 soldiers as per ministerial data.

The book is essentially a repository of the undaunted spirit of countless men in uniform, who remain buried in old records and dusty files, but have now been revived by the author's inquiry. The book chronologically dates the contribution of soldiers as early as the World War Era, that saw significant contribution from India. Risaldar Badlu Singh (14th Murray's Jat Lancers), who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery in the Middle East theatre along with seven men who were also awarded the Indian Order of Merit, charged to defend positions of their squadron regardless of the grave danger they faced. Such is the daring spirit of our soldiers who give their today for our tomorrow.

Camaraderie in the military is unique. At times it gives you strength to sustain rigorous environmental constraints, bond over little things to give an essence of family, and at times just looking after one another. One such instance is of Company Havildar Major (CMH) Chhelu Ram Garhwal and Subedar Richhpal Ram Lamba, both Victoria Cross Awardees, who breathed their last in the dusty battlefields of Africa fighting the Axis forces. Both belonged to 4 Rajputana Rifles and were affectionate towards each other. After Subedar Richhpal Ram attained martyrdom in 1941 in Keren (then in Eritrea), CHM Chhelu Ram decided to name his son in respect and admiration of his senior. Battles not only change the fate of soldiers and generals involved in the conflict but impact the lives of many through associations like these and keep reminding us of the unsung heroes.

The book provides many such anecdotal accounts of armed forces personnel who lived '*a life less ordinary*'. It should not only be a source of inspiration to boys and girls who dream of serving

the nation but to all those who wish to understand our men in uniform, keep igniting your minds!

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); (New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, March 2023); Pages: 224; Price: Rs 795/-; ISBN: 939009576X.*

The book, 'War to Peace Wisdom and Leadership: Ex-Servicemen's Role in Good Governance and Rural Development', written by Lt Gen (Dr) S.K. Gadeock, AVSM (Retd), is not only an ode to those who have served this nation as a part of the armed forces, but also a map to a possible future which shows a path that capitalises on the potential of these ex-servicemen.

The name 'War to Peace' is quite accurate in the context of what the book suggests. While one has read about the ravages of war and the longing for peace in many a harrowing and poetic accounts, Gen Gadeock has given an unprecedented account of why it is important to realise the potential of the ex-servicemen and how imperative it is to recognise their unique abilities as well as their potential. The book also focuses exclusively on rural India, elucidating upon the fact that while urbanisation has been a rapid process, rural India remains underdeveloped, however, the character of rural India has changed from that of being dependent on just the primary sector to that of a region just beginning to explore its capabilities.

The author opines that ex-servicemen in rural settings in India possess a unique set of skills and experiences that make them ideal candidates for leadership positions. Their discipline, work ethic, and communication skills, developed through their years of military service are invaluable qualities that can be applied to a range of settings. These skills are particularly important in rural areas where access to basic amenities and infrastructure can be challenging. Moreover, ex-servicemen have a deep understanding of the challenges faced by their communities. They have firsthand experience of the difficulties of living in remote areas and the struggles that people face in accessing basic amenities such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This makes them well-equipped to identify the needs of their communities and to develop strategies to address these issues.

The author, who has spent an illustrious and unblemished 40-year long career in the Indian Army, states in the book that the ex-servicemen also possess a strong sense of ethics and integrity, which can be invaluable in combating corruption. Their experience in the armed forces has instilled a strong sense of discipline and a commitment to honesty and transparency. It is also important to note that the age at which most troops of the Indian Army retire ranges from 35–40 years, and this number, which the book suggests is approximately 60,000, will only increase with *Agniveers*. It would be a symbiotic relationship if the ex-servicemen are placed in leadership positions. In this manner they can have a second career and they can use their leadership roles to promote accountability, fairness, and transparency in their communities. They can work to establish systems that discourage corrupt practices and ensure that public resources are used for the benefit of the community as a whole. Their commitment to ethical behaviour and their willingness to speak out against corruption can inspire others to do the same, creating a culture of honesty and accountability.

Additionally, ex-servicemen can serve as role models for the youth in rural India. They can provide a sense of purpose and direction to young people, who may be struggling to find their place in society. Ex-servicemen can share their experiences and lessons learned from their time in the military, emphasising the importance of discipline, hard work, and service to others. They can inspire young people to pursue education, take up a profession or trade, and contribute to their communities. The book also talks about them serving as mentors to young people, helping them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in life. They can provide guidance on education, career choices and personal development, as well as offer a listening ear and emotional support when needed. This can be particularly beneficial in rural areas where access to mentors and role models may be limited.

Ex-servicemen in rural settings in India have the potential to not only provide effective leadership but also to be strong advocates for anti-corruption efforts and role models for the youth. By leveraging their experience and skills, ex-servicemen can contribute significantly to the development and well-being of their communities and inspire a new generation of leaders who are committed to ethics, integrity, and service. Their leadership potential can make

a significant difference in the lives of people in rural India, improving their access to basic amenities, promoting transparency, accountability and fairness, and inspiring young people to pursue their dreams. The book looks at a way forward to make the most out of the potential of such young men and women of the armed forces in building a future for the nation.

Dr Aparajita Pandey

Two Decades of US-Taliban War in Afghanistan. *By Major General Samay Ram, UYSM, AVSM, VSM; (New Delhi: Sabre and Quill, January 2022); Pages: 180; Price: Rs. 899/-; ASIN: B0BH5C2H8H.*

This book has been written by a senior Indian Army Officer who has participated in three Indo-Pak wars and also in IPKF operations in Sri Lanka. The book deals with the understanding of the various dimensions of the US-Taliban War in Afghanistan. The author gives credibility and authenticity to his writings based on his experience of four years as the Military Attaché in the Embassy of India, Kabul, at a time when the Soviets were in occupation of Afghanistan. The book is divided into three parts:

- Part I deals with the understanding of Afghanistan, its history, its geography, and its people.
- Part II covers the period when Afghanistan was under the US and its NATO Allies. This part deals with the main US – Taliban War.
- Part III covers the period when the Taliban returned to power and Afghanistan came under their occupation.

In Part I, the author covers the history of Afghanistan in brief. The chronological details show how Afghanistan served as the gateway for all invaders like Alexander and Babur, who came to India from Southern Central Asia. The salient features of the history highlight two issues; one, the history of Afghanistan is written in blood; two, Afghanistan has been the grave yard of the foreign empires like the British and later the Soviet Union, implying that the Afghans never accepted to be under the rule of foreign empires.

Part II covers the period from the time US invaded Afghanistan till its exit along with US and its Allies. It highlights why the US invaded Afghanistan and defeated the Taliban, who withdrew to

the safe heavens provided by Pakistan along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, eliminating all their bases from Afghanistan. Once Osama Bin Laden was caught and killed, the US and its Allies enhanced the scope of war and its objectives to include establishment of a duly elected Afghan Government, strengthening of the Afghan National Security Forces, and carrying out development of infrastructure, which gave time to the Taliban to reorganise and re-equip themselves and resume their offensive against the US and its Allies engaging them into a counter insurgency war, a war that the US wanted to avoid. Perforce, the US was forced into changing its military strategies. The counter insurgency operations continued even after Osama Bin Laden was hunted and killed. After fighting for over a decade, the US realised that they were fighting a war with no end.

Having handed over the responsibility of security of Afghanistan, the US offered a negotiated settlement with the Taliban. Left to fight their own battle, the Afghan Forces began to disintegrate under the pressure of the Taliban leading to their defeat; forcing the Afghan President to flee and abandon his country. The author carries out an assessment examining the reasons why the Afghan Security Forces collapsed and why the US failed to win the War; one of the major reasons being the continued trust of Pakistan as an ally knowing fully that it was playing the dubious role of supporting the Taliban. The US-Taliban War culminated into the hurried exit of the US troops from Afghanistan and the return of Taliban to power in Kabul. The coverage of this momentous period makes very interesting reading to bring home the lesson of history that the Afghans never accept the rule of a foreign power – not even the mighty US.

Part III deals with the resurgence of the Taliban and how they progressively captured part by part of Afghanistan till they captured Kabul in a swift offensive and constituted an Interim Administration in alliance with the Hekmatyar Group –it was an unholy alliance. The Taliban Government then declared its policies not much different from that of 1996, throwing Afghanistan back into the dark era. Thereafter, the Taliban Government engaged itself to seek recognition by the world community so that international aid could flow to improve its financial position. This Part also deals with the threats emanating from various sources to the survival of the Taliban Government. Some part is also

devoted to the efforts of some of the countries in forming an 'All Inclusive Government'. Towards the end, the author reviews the current situation in Afghanistan and, finally, takes the hazardous risk of predicting the future of Taliban.

The subject matter is well researched and the author has covered all the nuances of the US-Taliban War in Afghanistan and presented in a manner that it is easy to comprehend. Attempting any prediction to the future of the Taliban in Afghanistan is rather risky. The book is of immense value to the officials of the Ministry of External Affairs who find themselves posted in the Embassy of India, Kabul. It is of great value to those engaged in Counter Insurgency Operations. The book will be a great value addition to any library.

Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)

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* Available at USI of India ** Available at M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd

USI

(Estd. 1870)

OUR ACTIVITIES

Library and Reading Room

The library holds over 68,000 books, and journals, including some books of 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, on an astonishing variety of subjects. While the principal emphasis is on strategy and defence, there are a large number of works on different vistas of Indian life. There are memoirs, biographies, recollections, diaries, journals, manuscripts for scholars and researchers. The reading room is air-conditioned, spacious and well stocked in terms of current reading material. Library was automated in 2002.

Correspondence Courses

The Institution runs regular correspondence courses for officers of the Armed Forces to assist them in preparing for promotion examinations, and for the entrance examinations to the Defence Services Staff College and Technical Staff College. Over the years, this has been a significant and well-received activity.

USI Journal

The *USI Journal* is the oldest surviving defence journal in the country and in Asia, having first appeared in 1871. In an era when there is a feeling that free expression of views by Defence personnel is not looked upon kindly by the establishment, the Journal in fact provides just such a forum, without regard to seniority and length of service in the Armed Forces, subject of course, to propriety and quality of the written work.

Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation

The Erstwhile Centre for Research and its resources have been merged into the new Centre named as USI Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (USI-CS3) wef 01 January 2005. The Centre aims at conducting detailed and comprehensive enquiry, research and analyses of national and international security related issues, and gaming and simulation of strategic scenarios, to evolve options for wider discussion and consideration.

USI Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

The Centre was established in 2000 and functioned with USI till Aug 2014, when it moved out of USI premises and was delinked from USI. Its aims were organising workshops, seminars and training capsules for peace-keepers, observers and staff officers – both

Indian and foreign. It also oversaw the practical training of Indian contingents. It functioned under a Board of Management headed by the Vice Chief of the Army Staff and worked in close coordination with the Service Headquarters and the Ministries of External Affairs and Defence. In August 2014, CUNPK moved out to the accommodation allotted by the Army HQ.

Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS)

The USI-Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (USI-CMHCS) was established in December 2000 at the behest of the three Service Headquarters for encouraging an objective study of all facets of Indian military history with a special emphasis on the history of the Indian Armed Forces. It focuses on diverse aspects of the history of Indian military evolution, policies and practices-strategic, tactical, logistical, organisational, socio-economic, as well as the field of contemporary conflict studies in the broader sense.

Gold Medal Essay Competition

Every year the Institution organises a gold medal essay competition open to all officers. These essays, the first one of which was introduced in 1871, constitute a barometer of opinion on matters that affect national security in general and the defence forces in particular.

USI-War Wounded Foundation Joint Essay Competition

This essay competition was instituted in 2021 after signing of the MoU between USI and the War Wounded Foundation. The competition is open to all across the globe and must be on the subject of issues relating to the experiences and/or rehabilitation of war disabled personnel of the Armed Forces of India.

Lt Gen SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition

This has been instituted from 2015 on a subject related to Armed Forces Historical Research. The Essay Competition is open to all across the globe.

Lectures, Discussions and Seminars

A series of lectures, discussions and seminars on service matters, international affairs, and topics of general interest to the Services, are organised for the benefit of local members in Delhi.

MacGregor Medal

This medal is awarded to Armed Forces personnel for valuable reconnaissance and adventure activity they may have undertaken.

MEMBERSHIP

The following are eligible to become members of the Institution :

- Officers of the Armed Forces
- Class I Gazetted Officers of Group 'A' Central Services.
- Any category mentioned above will be eligible even though retired or released from the Service.
- Cadets from the NDA and Cadets from the Service Academies and Midshipmen.

For further particulars, please write to Director General, USI of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg, (Opposite Signals Enclave) Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi – 110 057

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