



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

WEST BENGAL BRANCH

AFA BRANCH NEWS



Relics / Tourist Attractions

Random Thoughts

*Reminiscences
Of Things Past*

PSYCHOLOGY

AFA BRANCH NEWS
WEST BENGAL BRANCH

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After the hectic activities of celebrating the 43rd AFA Raising Day, we have planned another month full of festivities. This month we are celebrating Durga Puja. The 05- day festival celebrates Goddess Durga's victory over the demon king Mahishasura.

To make this Puja ever memorable, we planned a first ever trip to visit a Sabeki Barir Durga Puja at Jonai with the families of Air Veterans. The success of this venture will embolden us to undertake many more such activities in future.

Wishing Happy Durga Puja.

JAIHIND



Veteran WO Gautam Dan

Postal Reg No. KOL RMS/246/2013-2015
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CELEBRATION OF VIJAYA SAMMELANI OF AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION :

Bijaya Sammelani Celebration on 09 Nov 2023 (Thursday).

We, the Air Veterans and families of WB Branch will be celebrating the Bijaya Sammelani on 09 Nov 2023 (Thursday) evening 17.30 at Albert Ekka Hall at Fort William.

Details as follows:

Date. 09 November 23; **Time .** 1730 hours

Venue. Albert Ekka auditorium Fort William

Dress. Casual

Registration fee @ Rs 300/- per head

Entry is after registration and collection of refreshment coupon. Shri Manomay Bhattacharya the famous professional singer will give a performance in the evening. Members are requested to join the cultural extravaganza with relatives and friends. Please confirm your attendance by 6th Nov by paying the fee in AFA SBI account and sharing the screen shot to Mr Chandan Guchhait.

SBI Bank Account details:

Name : Air Force Association West Bengal Branch.

Account No. : 40440288736., **IFSC Code :** SBIN0006905

Branch : SBI Pramathesh Barua Sarani Branch.

CELEBRATION OF 43rd RAISING DAY OF AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION : 15 SEPTEMBER

On the 43rd Raising Day of Air Force Association, the Air Veterans of West Bengal Branch made their presence felt in a colorful celebration at Air Force Camp Ballygunge with traditional pomp and glory. A large number of air veterans with family joined the event. It started with a march by the veterans with a military band in attendance. It was a treat to the eyes to see the enthusiasm of very senior citizens marching with caps and authorized Service Medals.



The March was flagged off by the President AFA, WB Branch Veteran Group Captain KK Kundu and received by Veteran AVM Subhsh Chandra Mukherjee AVSM and Mrs Sheila Chowdhury, the eldest member present. It was led by



Veteran Gp Capt Sariful Islam. The assembled veterans then paid homage to the martyrs by observing silence and laying wreaths. The speakers exhorted



the members to keep the motto of Air Force "Touch The Sky With

Glory" burning in their heart and lead a life of service and



cooperation. The octogenarian members were felicitated amid cheers from the members. It was an occasion of rejuvenating the camaraderie and bonding which sustain the soldiers in their hard and dangerous life. There were also moments of nostalgia as members were recounting their experiences through war and peace. The program ended at 1130h with a High Tea.



CHANGE OF PERMANENT ADDRESS POST RETIREMENT : RETIRED OFFICERS

The provision for change of permanent Home Address (PHA) for retired officers has recently been introduced. The procedure for post retiral change of Permanent Home Address in respect of retired officers and annotating/incorporating the changes /amendments in their existing SBO is available in AFA office. Interest members may contact-Veteran Gp Capt KK Kundu, M: 8135853023.

CELEBRATION OF AIR FORCE DAY 8 OCT 2023



AF Day Party at ADV HQ on 08 October. ACM Arup Raha PVSM AVSM VM and AVM Rahul Bhasin VM, AOC ADV HQ along with Veterans



Social evening on AF Day AF Stn Barrackpore



Die-hard spirit! Jubilant Veterans at the end of the get-together.

RANDOM THOUGHTS - by Veteran Gp Capt KK Kundu.

As I write this column, the spirit of festivity is spreading in the air. We have celebrated the AFA Day with your active participation. So many octogenarians braved the inclement weather and attend the event so that we could felicitate them for their long years of service and contribution to the organization.

The 91st AF Day is being celebrated in AF Stations. Traditionally Veterans are invited on this occasion. This presents an opportunity not only to renew our bonding with the great organization which we served for the better part of our life but also to meet each other and get connected. Connectivity is the key to lead a stress free life in this age when most of our senior members

are staying without their children near them.

We are introducing a new activity during the Pujas. For a change from the way we spend the puja days, this time we have planned an excursion to the countryside. A short distance away is Jonai near Dankuni, a village Jonai which was very prosperous when Kolkata was just born. There we will get a chance of witnessing a heritage Puja at the house of Chowdhuries. There are old temples, big water bodies and an abundance of greeneries. In short it's expected to be a day full of fun.

Immediately after the puja we are going to celebrate Vijaya Sammelani and this time we are planning a musical night with the popular professional artist Shri

Manoma Bhattacharya. Kindly mark 09 Nov evening in your calendar for the event. Your presence in great numbers will enthruse the artist for a steller performance.



We are helping air veterans in the process of migration to SPARSH as well as correction of documents. Some veterans are taking membership of AFA which encourages us in continuing with our services. But we want to penetrate the veteran community in large numbers. YehDil Mange More!

Jai Hind!

ONE ZERO, OVERHEAD

On 16 Sep 2017 the Legendary Marshal of Indian Air Force Arjan Singh DFC left the world, still he inspires the force and is with the force.

A tribute to Marshal Arjan Singh by a former IAF officer.

"ONE-ZERO, OVERHEAD"

The R/T in Air Traffic Control crackled, "Blackjack Tower; One-Zero, Two Minutes". And there was panic! The SATCO had just enough time to respond "Call Overhead" before he grabbed his telephone and called up the Station Commander. In minutes, the news went round the Station. The AOC Operations Command was descending (literally) on us for an inspection.



TT, Toothless terror

This was Air Force Station Adampur in 1957, a remote airfield in the heart of the Punjab, where 27 Sqn was based. There was only one operational Command at that time, covering the whole of India, commanded by the legendary 38 year-old Air Cmde Arjan Singh DFC.

He was a typical "operational" officer who believed in absolute professionalism. He was not impressed with the usual superficial spit-and-polish carried

out in preparation for an inspection. All he expected was smartly turned out personnel who knew their job and carried it out efficiently. He did not like any fuss made over him and insisted that everyone went about their duties in their normal way.

He visited our operational base without any warning, flying in by himself, in a single-seat fighter aircraft (Vampire Mk52). His distinctive callsign was "One-Zero". And his R/T call to our ATC was the first indication that he was just two minutes away.

Then followed the standard R/T calls, "One-Zero, Thirty Seconds", to which ATC responded, "Clear Downwind". And then, as we looked up at the sky, we could see his aircraft running in to join circuit. Another crisp R/T call, "One-Zero, Overhead", a smart peel off, and he could be seen on downwind, lowering his undercarriage and calling, "One-Zero, Downwind, Three-Green". ATC responded, "Clear Finals". He made a typical old time fighter pilot curved approach, called, "One-Zero, Finals, Three-Green", ATC responded, "Clear to Land" and he touched down on the dumbbell.

During this time, there was a flurry of activity all over the Station. Everybody was trying to get everything as ship-shape as possible, in the very limited time available.

The AOC Ops Command taxied into the squadron dispersal, undid his straps and eased his large and impressive silver overall-clad frame out of the cockpit, to be met by the Station Commander and Squadron Commander. An open jeep with the AOC's flag pulled up close by, the AOC politely told the Cpl driver to go back to the MT

Section, he himself got behind the wheel and drove off all alone.



For the next few hours the AOC drove himself all over the Station, still in his flying overalls, visiting every nook and corner, from Airmen's Mess to Bomb Dump, from Squadron Dispersals to Air Traffic Control, from Orderly Room to MI Room, from Ops Room to Guard Room, observing the routine functioning of various sections and stopping to have an informal word with officers and airmen at each place. He even visited the DLTs (we had only "dry sanitation" those days)!

He then drove back to the squadron dispersal, had a few words with the Station Commander and Squadron Commander, in the latter's office, and then joined the officers in the Crew Room, for an informal chat and a glass of tea.



Behind the bar: Fourth from left

After which he climbed back into his single-seat Vampire and flew back to Delhi.

There was no ceremonial reception, no guard of honour, no fancy car, no silver tea service, no cups and saucers, no formal dinner, no unnecessary fuss. He did not bring a Staff Officer with him, or even an ADC. All he wanted was to personally check on the

operational preparedness of the Station.

Those were the days, my friends!

We knew we had a Boss who meant Business. And we did our very best to never let him down. He nurtured our Air Force for the next 12 years, till he retired as the Chief of the Air Staff in the rank of Air Chief Marshal in Aug 1969. Later, after he was awarded the lifetime serving rank of Marshal of the Indian Air Force (MIAF) on 26 Jan 2002, he continued to keep a benign watch on us.

And even now, he is, and always will remain with us, "One-Zero, Overhead".

--- Spanner
Sep 2017

He was famous for being simple yet strict. I have fond memories of him.

In Dec 1961 we, the 43 Sqn were celebrating our third anniversary in Jammu. (having shifted from snow-bound Srinagar for the winter). Our CO W/C MR Agtey made me incharge of entertainment & bar! (the drunkard that I was). My course mate Babu (later AVM) & I decided to invite Yuvraj Karan Singh and his wife Maharani Yashorajya Laxmi as Chief Guests. The two Flying Officers all dressed in their finery with medals and peak caps (we hardly ever wore the uniforms since we used to fly about 200 hours each per month, so we always were either in those unfitting sloppy flying overalls made in a dirty blue cloth by some unknown tailor in Chandani Chowk of Delhi + very cumbersome shin length black boots by Flex) other times we bathed at night after

dinner and went hunting for an empty bed).

The two smarties went to the palace, disregarding the secretary marched into the Yuvraj's office, gave the smartest salute that would have made our NDA drill Sergeant Major RSM AYLING, from Queens Guards, very proud!

We humbly requested him for gracing the occasion.

Silence. Quiet. A smile started on his face and he accepted! Salute, about turn, quick March and we walked in air out of his office.

The CO, Station Commander Air Cmdre. Anantnarayanan were in shock. But Jammu Station got painted, walls cleaned, lawns mowed, new livery for waiters, every bit got seen to for the first time after the Second World War.

Now we had to have a band for the dance.

A training cross country was planned two days before the anniversary to Palam. It used to be a runway in the middle of nowhere, miles away from Delhi and no taxis. The drivers used to charge return fare. Babu suggested the band of Ashoka Hotel, the only five star hotel of those days. Went there in the evening, sweet talked the leader, offered double the money, free drinks and pickup & drop.

Agreed.

Next morning the six of them were smuggled into the Dakota, put into khaki overalls, their instruments loaded in the toilet compartment and made them comfy in aluminium folding seats. Babu went to clear the flight while I prepared the aircraft.

Lo and behold a black limousine approached the machine with a flag, and a tall uniformed Air Vice Marshal unfolded himself out of this

gleaming car.

Oh boy, I ran out and saluted him, the AOC Operational Command Arjan Singh.

"Where is this a/c going?"

"Sir, to Jammu."

"Who is the Captain?"

"Sir, myself, Fg Offr Bhalla."

"OK, I am coming along too, Captain, for your anniversary tonight."

"Sssir, yyyess."

Offered him the left seat, no, right seat, alright, I will be your copilot today."

(bloody hell, hope I do the right checks, vital actions and oh God, heaven above save me today!)

As we got airborne, "safety speed undercarriage UP!"

He was a PERFECT COPILOT, EXEMPLARY!

Who are these passengers, he asked.

A quick reply, HAL personnel, sir.

(in those days the Dakotas were maintained by HAL technicians in the forward areas and overhaul was done in Barrackpore)

All well so far. A good landing in Jammu, and he was received by the AOC.

The evening started with a bang, the Yuvraj, Yuvrani, AVM, AOC the whole Jing bang lot of officers and ladies (though a non-family station) including our girl friends the teachers in the local Convent School. All gyrating to the melodious tunes of the band.



AVM. "Your HAL technicians are wonderful at playing music."

CO. No sir that is a professional band!"

Some discussion goes on between the two and

I am summoned, the poor innocent guy!

AVM. You have a good band

and the party is wonderfully organised.

BUT

young man, next time get permission from the HQOPS CMD for civil passengers, just in case the gods are against you!

Never forgot that man's

way of handling a situation, admonished yet with full appreciation of work.

Later on, when I was in 106 Strategic Air Sqn and he was the Chief, he had special names for my CO & me, Jaggi Nath was 'professor' and I was 'TT' (short for

toothless terror) . I flew him in the Canberra many times for his famous inspections of various stations.

It has been the most memorable experience of my flying days.

"Calling overhead in two minutes".

PSYCHOLOGY - By Veteran Wg Cdr Biswadeb Guha

COUNSELING

(Continued after last episode)

CASE STUDY - 04

(Link from last issue for my fresh readers. This case study involves mainly two persons, one is Sqn Ldr Lal, second one is Surya a student of K V tenth standard. His father was AGE Mr Kumar civilian officer posted at GE(AF). S/L Lal was married but used to stay without family. He became very good family friend of Kumars. He started giving free tuition to the son. He was an active member of a newly formed religious group and used to preach it very secretly. His main target was grown up school children. First, he would be very close with the parents, next with his target so that the later could not escape. Suddenly S/L Lal was posted out to a far off place. Within four months Surya would be writing his first ever Public Examination.

He was missing his uncle Lal so much that he seldom could study. He went on missing on seventh day of his uncle's day of departure. His father reported to Stn Security Officer. With his permission a team of IAF Police visited his quarters. The team started searching Surya's books and note books. They could find a letter written by the boy to his parents . The letter states that his going was pre planned and fully

financed by the uncle. He had gone there to attend a religious discourse. He would return after seven days. The discovery of the letter gave a sort of immediate relief to all concerned persons. Somehow night passed.

Both of them became almost numb thinking about the future of their only child. Now my new readers should start reading today's post.)

Both Mr and Mrs Kumar were looking to each other with blank sight. They had lost all interests in life. They did not even get up from their bed. They closed their eyes, probably they wanted to sleep some more. Door bell rang up.

Suddenly they came back to reality with ringtone of their door bell. Mr Kumar got up, opened the door. To his surprise, he found that Mrs Srinivasan, wife of another AGE was waiting there along with her maid carrying breakfast and tea for them. After exchange of namaste Mrs Srinivasan sat down on sofa. Maid went to the kitchen to unload items she had brought.

In the meantime, Mrs Kumar joined them. Both the ladies had a bearhug with little sobbing and tears on eyes. Before leaving Mrs Srinivasan asked them to get ready within an hour time for a visit to Station Trauma Center. She would bring her car to pick

them up and ensured them that day's lunch, dinner and evening tea. That day passed.



The boy returned by morning flight on 08th day. Just after entering the house he realised, what a grave mistake he had committed. He had made his parents to suffer. He hugged his both the parents. All of them started sobbing followed by crying. It continued for sometime. They tried to come back to normalcy. But it was not that easy task. It would take much time.

Now, you can find Mr Mishra, the Principal of K V located at Air Force Station, he seen in the scene. Within a day or two, he requested Surya to be present in his office along with his both the parents on a particular date and time. When all of them were present in his office, he wanted to listen the whole story from Surya. After he finished, principal nodded his head and said, "You have lost some very precious time, no doubt. I think it is nothing for a very good student like you. Yes, I believe, within no time you can make good the loss. Reorientation is required for you. I am there for you. I am sure I will get full support from all of you? "All of them said", Yes Sir." "Very good. I start from tomorrow. My boy, you will report to me as a student at 0900 hrs

every day. It will continue till next two weeks. I shall review the situation then. Eat well, sleep well have some free hand exercise every day. Listen some soft music. Pass a little quality time with your parents. Your parents are your best friends. Now no other gods other than Mata Saraswati exists for you. She doesn't require any other Pooja than your studies. That you must do well as you did so long."

He stopped with a smiling face. He looked at all of them. He said, "My Best Wishes to you all".

Visitors left so satisfied that as if some one had injected new life soaked in new light and promises. After they had gone, Mr Mishra summoned all subject teachers and requested them to make a revision programme for Surya . Teachers were happy to do it. Next day onwards they had been implementing it on Surya. He was so happy about it that he did not feel any pressure of it on him. In between principal had kept one period "gap from studies". He used to utilise that time with Surya for counseling him. It was done in such a way that he did not understand any A B C D of it. For him it was a story telling, listening and question answer session. On the other hand, it was refreshing gap for him.

On the last day of second week, principal asked him to come to his room. After entering the chamber Surya could find a little change in that. A set of students' desk and chair was added there. He could understand then and there that it must have been made for him. Principal asked him to occupy that set.

He occupied it happily. He was ready for next instructions. One subject teacher came with

smiling face and handed over one set of question papers and blank answer book to him. Though this programme was not declared earlier, Surya had thought, there must be a purpose behind it. Principal was so kind to him that he did not want him to suffer from examination fever. He was happy. He looked at the principal for a while. Then he started to concentrate his attention with the question paper. He found, duration three hours, question paper was a mixture of all elements covering the whole of syllabus. The moment he had finished his reading, the principal declared, " your three hours time begins now." Surya started writing. The Principal was tight with his chair. In between drinking water, tea with snacks were supplied to both of them. He could finish the writing of all the answers within two hours thirty-five minutes. Principal asked him to do a revision. He did so In the mean time the Vice Principal was summoned there. He came there, collected answer book from Surya and went back. Principal stood up said "My boy, I am going out for ten minutes. You also go out for twelve minutes, have some fresh air and come back soon. We shall have some eats together. I am feeling hungry. I think, after doing so much of brain exercise you too require some thing to eat." Both of them left the chamber.

Surya came back a little before time. He wanted to confirm if the principal could come back or not. Before he could do anything, one voice came from inside, come my boy come inside, sit in front of me. Egg sandwiches are under preparation. Any moment it will be served to us.

Sandwiches and tea were served properly. The boy was

highly impressed. After the tea session was over, Mr Mishra engaged the boy in talking .

"My boy, what is the latest information about your uncle ?"

"No idea Sir. Since I came back, neither he rang me up nor did I. Your prediction has come true. I think, as you told me, he has lost interest on me. I shall not answer to his call any more."

"Very good, my dear Surya . Now, it is time for you to work hard for to make your future."

"You must set your own goal very high and carry on work hard to achieve it".

The Vice principal arrived with result in hand. On seeing him entering the chamber, Surya stood up to express his respect .

Principal requested him to declare the result. VP declared, "Sir, Surya got A+". Both Mr Mishra and Surya gave wide sweet smile of satisfaction.

Then Principal said, "My boy, don't think that your battle is over. It has just began. Now, a long way to go. Now, you go home happily. Share your news with your parents. You need not study today, rather completely relax. From now onwards you need not visit us. It will be other way around. Be in touch with us. We will reach you as per your request. Now go home my boy". He stood up, offered his pranam to principal and VP and left the chamber.

Like all other good students Surya also put his best for preparation. It brought colours not only to him and his family but also to his school along with the locality. He got First rank in his region and fifth rank on all India basis.

For next issue you will find case study No.5

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RELICS / TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Category: Historical cum Heritage Places in, West Bengal

Compiled & Edited by Veteran Sgt Syed Humayun Siraj



Temples of Baranagar: Terracotta marvels that make



The intricate ornamentation on the walls with 'do-chala' roofs make these centuries-old temples worth a visit

Baranagar has always lived under the shadows of its more famed counterpart, Murshidabad. It is located on the other side of the Bhagirathi River and also has its share of history. A series of amazing temples, complete with intricate stucco and terracotta



The Char Bangla Temple Complex



Another view of the Char Bangla Temple Complex

ornamentation, can well turn Baranagar into an add-on destination from Murshidabad.

The history of Baranagar dates back to the time of Rani Bhabani (1716-95) of Natore, who was the female zamindar of Rajshahi (both Natore and Rajshahi are presently in Bangladesh). She was married to Raja Ramakanta, the zamindar of Rajshahi and after his death in 1748, she took charge

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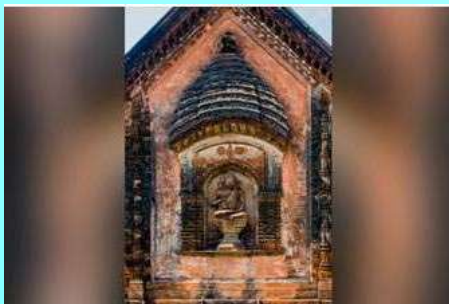


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of the zamindari and expanded it. She was an able administrator and maintained a good relationship with the British. She led a very austere and religious life and was known for her philanthropic activities. Later, Rani Bhabani shifted her capital to Baranagar and decided to turn it into a second Varanasi by building 108 Shiva temples. Many of the temples built by Rani Bhabani have been engulfed by the changing course of the Bhagirathi River but a few have survived and stand to this day.

Char Bangla Temple Complex:

The Char Bangla Temple Complex is the prime attraction of Baranagar. It has four temples built in Bengali do-chala style and hence the name. The do-chala style represents the typical thatched roof huts seen in Bengal. Here, you'll see two sloping roofs (or chalas) both in the front and back. The complex dates back to 1755 and houses three Shivalings approached by a triple arched entrance. Three of the temples have intricate terracotta ornamentation while the fourth one has elaborate stucco work.

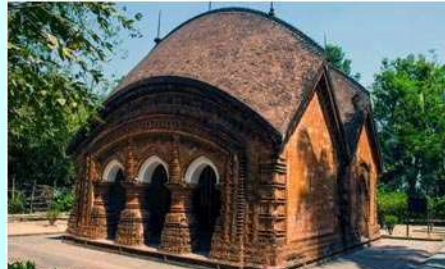


Terracotta ornamentation of a Char Bangla temple

Gangeshwar Temple:

The other attraction of Baranagar is the Gangeshwar

Temple, which follows the jora-Bangla type of architecture. In jora-Bangla style, two do-chala temples are joined side by side and hence the name. This temple also has a triple arched entrance. The intricate terracotta ornamentation of the front façade makes the temple unique.



The Gangeshwar Temple

Bhavaniswar Temple:

The octagonal Bhavaniswar Temple has a unique architectural style and is topped with an inverted lotus shaped dome. The temple was constructed in 1755 by Tarasundari, daughter of Rani Bhabani. The temple has arched entrances on all the eight sides and



Bhavaniswar Temple



Stucco ornamentation of Bhavaniswar Temple

both the inner and outer walls contain intricate terracotta ornamentation depicting gods and goddesses along with mythological stories complete with floral patterns. Next to the Bhavaniswar Temple are two similar temples but much smaller in size. Sadly, the temples are in a crumbling stage with the plaster peeled off along with the ornamentation.

Panchamukhi Temple:

The last temple in Baranagar is the Panchamukhi temple. And as the name suggests, the Shivaling of the temple consists of five faces. It follows the typical do-chala style of architecture. It is an active temple and has been given a modern look.



The Panchamukhi Temple

Travel Information:

Baranagar doesn't have much tourist infrastructure, so the tour is best done from Murshidabad. Totos are available from Murshidabad

Bari Kothi, a heritage boutique hotel located in Azimganj, is just south of Baranagar. They arrange specially curated tours of Baranagar, which include ferry rides along the Bhagirathi. But that's very expensive as well