

03 February 1999

From:

To: Chief of Naval Personnel, (NPC-440C), 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055.

Subj: INDIAN DEFENSE SERVICES STAFF COLLEGE END OF TOUR REPORT

1. Background. I attended the 53rd Staff Course at the Defense Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington, India from 09 Jun 97 to 02 May 98. I am a Surface Warfare Officer with primarily an engineering background, and attended the course following my tour as Executive Officer in USS GEORGE PHILIP (FFG 12). Originally I had orders to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, but two months prior to that reporting date the Indian Staff College billet was available, so I took it. Due to personal economic considerations, my wife did not accompany me during the tour with the exception of a two-week holiday.

2. DSSC Organization. The Staff College is the junior level staff course and one of the most prestigious postings for Indian officers. All three branches of the Indian Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) attend the course as well as selected officers from foreign countries, the Indian Coast Guard and Indian Administrative Services. The course is a prerequisite for Indian Army Officers to be promoted from Major to Lieutenant Colonel, but is of lesser importance to Naval and Air Force Officers, although mandatory for staff appointments. The Staff College is divided into three service wings. There were approximately 260 Indian Army officers, 75 Indian Navy Officers and 85 Indian Air Force officers. There were also 28 foreign officers from the following countries:

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>DISTRIBUTION</u>
Australia	Navy (1)
Bangladesh	Army (1), Navy (1)
Bhutan	Army (1)
Indonesia	Army (1)
Madagascar	Army (1)
Malaysia	Air Force (1)
Myanmar	Air Force (1), Army (1)
Namibia	Army (1)
Nepal	Army (1)
Nigeria	Air Force (1), Army (1)
Oman	Army (1)
Senegal	Army (1)
South Korea	Army (1)
Sri Lanka	Air Force (1), Army (1), Navy (1)
Thailand	Air Force (1)
UAE	Army (1)
United Kingdom	Army (2), Air Force (1)
United States	Army (1), Navy (1)
Vietnam	Navy (1)
Zimbabwe	Army (1)

There were also officers from the Indian government and paramilitary forces as follows:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Distribution</u>
Administrative Service	2
Coast Guard	2

3. Wellington. Wellington is located in the southern middle of the state of Tamil Nadu in the Nilgiris mountains. Wellington is a military cantonment adjoined to the town of Coonoor. The closest major city is Coimbatore. It is about 7,000 feet above sea level. The temperate climate is quite cool (50-60) during the monsoon seasons (July-December).

4. College Facilities. Various campus buildings house the three military wings of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Small classrooms are called syndicates and have 9-10 students, with usually one foreigner/Indian government officer/paramilitary officer per class. Four large classrooms are used for joint division syndicate discussions, lectures and war games. There are several older auditoriums which are used for group or wing presentations. The newest and largest lecture hall, Sekhon, is divided into two auditoriums. This large lecture hall is used for foreign student presentations, VIP guest lectures, and MRPs (see Presentations). Most lecture halls have full audio/visual facilities, and PowerPoint reigns supreme. It is important to note that the school is rather resource poor, but getting better with regards to computer technology. I recommend a notebook computer to take over there with an extra battery, it works everywhere and makes the assignments less time consuming (not always, you must experience this to understand my meaning). There are various administrative buildings. One houses the Directing Staff (Instructors, Senior Instructors, Commandant, etc.). One is for general services for the student officers (housing, recreation services, food coupons for house staff, etc.). And there is a third, Chanakya, which is used for notice boards (announcements, schedule changes, etc.), tea breaks, and student mailbox/lockers. Check this place daily, the schedule is very dynamic.

The college has a library, with current magazines, student service and research papers (dissertations/theses), and professional periodicals. However, many books are quite old and finding reference material takes an aggressive imagination. I found myself picking a topic for a paper based on what I thought I could find in the Library, not on what was supposed to be there. Other buildings include a coffee shop, video shop (pirated only, quality not good, but cheap), commissary/exchange, bakery and package store.

The staff college has many recreational facilities available for the student officers, many of which are free or heavily subsidized. The green fees for the golf course are \$1.00 per month. Caddies cost \$.75 for 18 holes. It's a good deal. Other activities include horse back riding, tennis, sailing, basketball, cricket, badminton, fishing, hiking and many social functions.

5. Instructors. The instructors are called Directing Staff (DSs). Indian Army DSs are in the rank of full colonel, Air Force are Wing Commanders and Navy has Commanders. Each foreign student is assigned a sponsor student and DS to help him throughout the year. They are supposed to represent the best of the Defense Services, which is true in the case of the Army and Navy, but not necessarily the Air Force (quite often officers who fail to screen for command). The senior DS in each wing is the DS in charge of schedules and events coordination or DS Coord. The next in line is the Senior Instructor (SI) for each wing. For the Army this would be a Brigadier, Air Commodore for the Air Force and Commodore for the Navy. The head of each wing is the Chief Instructor (CI). For the Army, the rank is a Major General, an Air Vice Marshal for the Air Force, and Rear Admiral for the Navy. SIs and CIs occasionally visit the classrooms, observe and comment at times. Finally, the overall head of the college is the Commandant, an Army Lieutenant General. The idea of joint operations has an overwhelming Army slant, with 60-70% Army students in the course.

6. Course. The course dealt with typical Indian military staff officer duties, such as correspondence, orders, training programs, plans, briefings, etc. All tactical discussions and exercises were simple and unclassified. Wargames were played in joint syndicates and in wing syndicates. The wargames were manually run using field telephones and were very slow. Most class discussions were interesting and there was good interaction among foreigners and the Indian officers. Many assignments emphasized planning quickly with limited time. A Master of Science degree in Defense and Strategic Studies is granted after completion of the course and submission of an 8000 word dissertation. The course schedule is fairly rigid as far as attendance, but often there are many changes. There are exams at the end of each tutorial. These are not something to worry about. They are quite difficult and cover everything in the course. You never know your grade, but no one (especially a foreigner) has ever failed the course due to poor grades. The phrase "just do the best you can" absolutely applies. I never once asked what my standing was, or how I was doing.

7. Presentations. There were many student presentations, but two major presentations. First was the Minor Research Project (MRP), which was a joint effort of about 75 students. It took weeks to orchestrate and practice. It involved PowerPoint, briefs, skits, 35 mm slides, and possibly a sand model. The MRP was a two and one-half hour presentation to the college. The second presentation was applicable only to foreign officers and was a country presentation. This was a one hour presentation. It was very easy, and for the most part the country presentations were a highlight of the course.

8. Field Trips. Now, although the presentations were fun, these field trips were the experiences of a lifetime. The first one was in the fall and was called the Forward Area Tour. This was for Indian Air Force, Navy and all foreign officers. During this trip the college was divided into two, one group going to Sikkim and one group going to Arunachal Pradesh. I went to Arunachal Pradesh, and we had

a blast. The intent of the trip was to show the conditions and difficulties the Army faced operating in remote undeveloped areas of the country. We traveled primarily by aircraft (Russian made IL-76, AN-32, and Mi-17) in the northeast and were taken up as high as 15,000 feet altitude by truck to a forward post located near Bumla on the Sino-Indian border. From there you could see Tibet and the Chinese Himalayas.

Next was STAFFEX. This was a naval exercise, which took the entire school up to the port of Goa. From there we embarked on various ships and spent the day at sea returning to Wellington in the evening. The Indian Navy put on quite a weapons demonstration including dropping bombs, gun shoots, exercise torpedo shoots, etc.

The third trip was called the Industrial Demonstration Tour. It was supposed to give us a snapshot of some of India's leading industries and potential for further development. I visited museums, a couple of commercial factories, a paraplegic rehab center and the National Defense Academy. Foreign officers were deliberately kept from seeing some of the more high tech military-industrial areas for security reasons. We traveled by train and had a great time.

There was another trip, which followed our spring break. It was an Indian Air Force Air Power Demonstration. It was at Pokharan, and looking back it was an obvious effort to hide equipment movement to support the Indian nuclear tests there two months later. But I did not attend since I went to meet my wife in the Philippines for spring break and had airline trouble coming back.

9. Post-Course Attachment. Foreign officers are allowed to go on a post-course attachment to a static headquarters unit. I requested the HQ Fortress Andaman and Nicobar Islands (FORTAN) located at Port Blair and the Southern Naval Command at Cochin. I was turned down for the FORTAN request and went to Cochin. The Southern Naval Command was a training command, and I visited various enlisted and officer schools. I spoke with heads of departments who were more interested in what the US thought of India since they had tested their nuclear weapons the week before my arrival in Cochin. Most of their training equipment was old, Russian built and quite basic, but they tried as they always did to show their best. And they treated me very well.

10. Living Facilities. There are no American facilities in Wellington. The American Embassy has quite nice facilities, but I was only there for check in and check out. The Embassy in Delhi is 1200 miles from Wellington. But Wellington is not that bad. Here are some of the facilities in Wellington:

- Car, you pay for gas and driver, Embassy pays for maintenance.
- Apartment, fully furnished with
 - Gas oven/stove, refrigerator/freezer, cooking utensils, dishes, flatware, etc. I did not need anything.
 - Desks, book shelves, chairs, storage lockers/shelves.

- Ensure students follow on to the Armed Forces Staff College to get the US staff, and joint perspective, since this course offers only the Indian military point of view. I did this and it helped me get up to speed.
- Prospective students should not let the course bother them, travel as much as possible and enjoy the year. The course can get frustrating, but the overall experience is fantastic.

Very Respectfully,