



The Midtowner



Bulletin of Rotary Club of Chandigarh Midtown: R.L. District 3080

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Club No. 15228

www.rotarychdmidtown.org

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Dr. Rita Kalra

Editor
Dr. V.J.S. Vohra

Volume XXXVIII No. 47 Dated: May 27, 2014

PROGRAMME

Club Assembly
The Rotary year ahead

Friday, May 30, 2014

Time: 7.00 p.m.

Venue: Hotel President, Sector 26, Chandigarh

Customs and Traditions of Indian Army

On May 23, 2014 Rtn. Maj. Gen. R.S. Chopra (Retd.) gave an impressive presentation on 'Customs and Traditions of Indian Army'. He was introduced by Rtn. Maj. Gen. Hardev Singh. Born in an army family, Gen. Chopra had done his higher secondary from Air Force Central School, New Delhi. After six months in St. Stephens College Delhi, he joined National Defence Academy in



Maj. Gen. R.S. Chopra

Jan 1972. He was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery from the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun in Dec. 1975. In the Army career spanning 36 years, he held a large number of command and staff appointments. He was Instructor at School of Artillery for two tenures. He is an Alumni of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. He commanded his Regiment in intense Counter

Insurgency Environment in the Kashmir Valley from April 1997 to May 1999. He was awarded 'Mention in Despatches' for gallantry. He was selected for the Higher Command Course in May 1999. He was posted in the Perspective Planning Branch of Army Headquarters for three years. After that he commanded an Infantry Brigade as part of The Strike Corps in the Deserts, and then he was Brigadier General Staff of a Corps HQ in Punjab/Jammu Border. He took over a Mountain Division in Sikkim on the India-Tibet border in high altitude in 2009. Posted as Chief of Staff of The Desert Corps in 2010 from where he retired in Dec. 2011. He was awarded VSM (Vishisht Seva Medal) in Jan 2012. He joined Rotary Club Chandigarh Midtown in Feb 2014. Happily married to Renu, they have two sons. The elder one is well settled in UK, and was recently blessed with twin sons. The younger one has followed the family tradition and is a Captain in the same regiment as his father.

President Deepak Sood acknowledged the presence of the guests, Col. Dr. Paramjit Singh and Lt. Col. Dr. Charanjit Kaur, eldest sister of R'ann Indu Vohra and R'ann Renu Chopra.

In his talk, supported by a PowerPoint presentation, Maj. Gen. R.S. Chopra gave background of the Indian army and explained how the army is structured. He said, "Our army has the fighting arms; which includes the Infantry, the Armoured corps, and the Artillery; supported by the Engineers and Signals. Customs and traditions remain with the fighting arms." It is the legacy that has been taken from the Britishers. This keeps the regiment together and gives them the will to fight. It motivates the troops to go to the battle in a situation of life and death.

Gen. Chopra gave examples of customs and traditions of five units which are region or religion based : the Sikh Regiment, Special Forces, Assam Regiment, the Gurkhas and Madras Regiment.

The soldiers in Sikh regiment are recruited from Punjab and they are very strict about their religion. The officers may be from other states but they too try to follow the Sikh religion to the extent that a non-sikh Commanding Officer and other officers would wear turbans during the exercise, battle or ceremonious functions. Following the traditions keeps the officers and their troops bonded together.

Special Forces of the Indian Army are a mixed lot. They are tough and mentally strong. They are given specialized training to carrying out special operations, and also specialize in counter terrorism operations. They operate in small teams and do not wait for orders but act on their own, are very aggressive in their approach. As a tradition they never march. They double up!

Assam Regiment is unique. Boys are recruited from the 7 states in the North East. They have a tradition of salutation of words of 'Tagda raho' for addressing each other and the officers. They eat anything that moves. They are very innovative and can lay very good traps. They are excellent people.

There are 7 regiments of Gurkhas in the Indian army, each having 5 to 6 battalions. Majority of them are from Nepal and some from Indian domicile. They are very loyal and humble troops. The kukri is part of their uniform or whatever dress they wear. They have more or less similar names. So they have a tradition of being identified by the last two digits of their army number.

In Madras Regiment the recruitment is from four states of South India – Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Andhra. Namaskaran is the word they use. They are also excellent people and very innovative. Gen. Chopra told us about their pongal and onam which he enjoyed celebrating with them. They are known as thambis which means younger brother.

Coming to the Officers Mess, Gen. Chopra said it is an Institute in which all officers are its members. Ladies too go to the mess, when invited. Dress code has to be followed very rigidly. There are dinner nights and officers are trained in table manners. The mess staff is also trained to serve the officers in properly. The JCOs (Junior Commissioned Officers) have their own mess and do not go to Officers Mess except on special occasion like Republic Day when they are called for drinks and snacks. Officers do go to JCO mess but on Independence Day it is a special occasion for officers to go to JCO mess.

Gen. Chopra said the prestigious place in the unit is the Quarter Guard where all arms and ammunition is kept. This place is

guarded 24x7 and the young officer is the duty officer present there. The trophies, the roll of honour, people who have lost their lives in battle are listed there. Any visiting officer coming to the unit goes to the Quarter Guard and takes the salute there. Retreat and Reville are sounded by the bugle. The tradition is to remember the persons who have lost their lives in battle.

Other things explained by Gen. Chopra was Mandir parade, a term used for the mandir, gurudwara, mosque or church to cater for the spiritual needs of the men to boost up their morale. Family Welfare Centre is for interaction between the ladies of the officers, JCOs and other ranks where the problems get resolved. Even health issues are discussed. Commanding Officer's wife, being the first lady of the unit initiates these welfare schemes.

Under Operation Sadbhavna, a people friendly program, vocational training is given, goodwill schools, medical camps and facilities are provided for ameliorating the sufferings of the people and carrying out socio-economic development.

Another important task taken by the army is to provide aid to civil

authorities when natural disaster takes place, like the army provided yeoman services for the devastating floods and landslides in Utrakhland.

There are some touchy issues that the army and other services are facing. One rank One Pension for defence personnel is going on since very long. Previous Govt. had announced that they will give it but it has not been done and the veterans are very upset about this. Gen. Chopra hoped that the new Govt. may implement the one rank-one pension scheme.

Talking about war memorial or respect for the army, Gen. Chopra narrated the story of Subedar Umrao Singh who was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) by Britishers for fighting off repeated attacks made on his section by the Japanese during the Arakan advance in December 1944. Unfortunately, in India gallantry award winners do not get public recognition as they do in many other countries where many honours are bequeathed on heroes. In India the soldiers are not respected as it is done in other countries.

Army has its own way of honouring their personnel when units



Rtn. Wing Comdr. Kamal Nath presents a token of appreciation to Rtn. Maj. Gen. R.S. Chopra. Looking on are President Deepak Sood and Secretary Dr. Rita Kalra



Gen. Chopra presents birthday gift to R'ann Beauty Mitra, accompanied by Rtn. Jayanta Mitra and daughter Ritwika



Gen. Chopra presents wedding anniversary gift to R'ann Rekha & PP Rtn. Anil K. Mehan



PP Rtn. Prem Anand is presented the punctuality award by Gen. Chopra. Looking on are President Deepak Sood and Secretary Dr. Rita Kalra

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celebrate 'Raising/Battle Honour Day' every year by having ceremonies, and even inviting the veterans for barakhana where the all the families, officers, JCOs and others have food together, and even have entertainment programs.

Being a Rotarian since Feb. 2014, Gen. Chopra was pleased to point out some interesting similarities between The Rotary and The Military. These are Discipline, Time Management, Task Oriented, Respect for Ladies and Functioning Hierarchy.

President Deepak Sood said those who were not present missed the

Laughter ka Tadka

During his presentation Maj. Gen. R.S. Chopra gave some 'Laughter ka Tadka', sort of humour in uniform. 'Tagda raho', is how the jawans of Assam Regiment addressed the healthy wife of the General Officer Commanding (GOC), and she got very annoyed. She summoned the CO, who explained that it is customary in his regiment to address as, 'Tagda raho'!

A General had a driver from Assam Regiment, named Darling. He had no choice but to address his driver as darling!

PP Pallav Mukherjee narrated how a young officer punished a jawan for not saluting him, by ordering him to salute 1000 times. General Sam Manakshaw was passing by and asked the youngster what was the problem. When the young officer explained that he

wonderful presentation by Gen. Chopra, which generated an interesting interactive discussion with the Rotarians who showed keen interest in knowing more about the army.

Formal vote of thanks was presented by Rtn. Wing Comdr. Kamal Nath. He too expressed his concern about the soldier, and said, "The respect shown to anybody from the armed forces is sadly lacking." He thanked Maj. Gen. R.S. Chopra for a very beautiful and informative presentation of the armed forces. He also expressed the hope that we have more talks of this nature.

was disciplining the jawan for not saluting him, Sam said, "Well done young man, but make sure that you respond to every salute that the jawan gives you." Next couple of hours was spent by the young officer in replying to the jawan's salutes!

Rtn. Wing Comdr. Kamal Nath shared his experience of mutton, chicken and fish having a flavour of phenoil because the Gurkha cook came to know that it kills bacteria while cleaning the floor!

Editor PP Dr. V.J.S. Vohra also had some tadka to share. A sardar jawan while boarding a bus in Mumbai, jumped from back of the que to go to the front. Other passengers objected and asked him to go back. He said, "When there is a war you people say, sardar ji aage jao, and now you tell me, sardar ji peeche jao!"

Career Guidance Seminar



Students being addressed by Rotarians



Career Guidance Seminar was held by our club at Government Model High School, Manimajra. Around 300 students were addressed about options in medical, non-medical, commerce, arts and army by Rotarian counsellors from our club, Secretary Dr. Rita

Kalra, Rtn. Ashok Puri, Rtn. Maj. Gen. Hardev Singh and Rtn. Rekha Sahwney.

R'ann Renu Chopra, Principal of the school organised the event meticulously and thanked the team for their guidance.

PDG Shaju to serve in the Core Committee of Chennai Institute

According to a communication received from PDG Raja Ramakrishnan, Chairman of the Rotary Institute 2014, Vanakkam Chennai of Zone 4, 5 and 6 A, scheduled for December 12 through 14, 2014, PDG Shaju Peter will be serving as a member of the Core

Committee. He will serve as Co-Chairman of Public Relations for Zone 4 consisting of 12 RI Districts in North, Central and Western India.

The Institute which is an assembly of Governors - past, present and

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future is an occasion where Rotary Leaders get together to listen to world leaders of Rotary and discuss the state of the organization and brainstorm about the future. RI Director PT Prabhakar and his Core Committee will be doing everything possible to make the Chennai Institute even more spectacular than the last institute held aboard Star Cruise last year. The Institute will have the distinguished

presence of RI President 2014-15 Gary Huang and Ann Corinna and RI President 2015-16 K.R. Ravindran and Ann Vanathi.

The venue is ITC Grand Chola the world's largest LEED Platinum Green Hotel named after the empire which ruled Tamil Nadu and its adjoining areas from the 3rd century to the 12th century AD.

Contributions to TRF

President Deepak Sood was pleased to inform that the appeals made by him and Secretary Dr. Rita Kalra, have got good response from Rotarians. Those who contributed to the Rotary Foundation during the last week are: **Rtn. Dev Jeet Singh (\$ 350), Rtn. Wing Comdr. Kamal Nath (\$ 350), Rtn. Lalit Azad (\$ 350), Rtn. Ashok Kumar**

Sharma (\$ 100) and Rtn. Dr. Jawahar Luthra (\$ 50). President Deepak thanked them for their contributions. But 'TRF mange more!' He said we are now short by \$ 1000 against our target of \$ 15000, and urged all Rotarians to contribute at least \$ 20 each.

Abhinandan – 2014 District Award Function on 29th June 2014

Annual District Awards function for Rotary year 2013-14, Abhinandan – 2014 will be held in Chandigarh, hosted by Rotary Club Chandigarh Central as per program given below:

Date: Sunday, 29th June 2014 Venue: Hotel Homotel, Industrial Area Business Park 1, Chandigarh

Registration: 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. (Welcome with Breakfast) Lunch: 2.00 p.m.

Registration Charges: Upto 15th June - Rs. 1100 (Single). Rs. 2100 (Couple).

After 15th June/spot - Rs. 1300 (Single). Rs. 2500 (Couple)

Booking of Stalls/Banner Display: Table space, inclusive of 2 chairs and a table - Rs. 11000

Banner display (size 4ft.x3ft.) inside the hall - Rs. 5000

For above and registration please contact Secretary Dr. Rita Kalra or Office Secy. V.P. Sharma.

Birthday of Spouses

R'ann Uneza Khandelia
R'ann Rekha Azad
R'ann Rashi Khosla
R'ann Sudha Puri
R'ann Sudershan



May 30
June 01
June 02
June 03
June 05

Wedding Anniversary

R'ann Indu & Rtn. Dr. Jawahar Luthra May 30

Punctuality Draw

Won by PP Rtn. Prem Anand

Valedictory Function is scheduled for Saturday, June 21, 2014. Venue will be intimated later



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