



# **BOOK REVIEW**

## **THE SINKING OF INS KHUKRI**

**Major General (Retd) Ian Cardozo  
Reviewed by Lt Ashwin Maratt**

Major Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM deserves immense credit for painstakingly gathering information from survivors of INS Khukri, and other Indian as well as Pakistani Naval personnel, to piece together this narrative about the supreme sacrifice made by Capt Mahendranath Mulla, thereby giving valuable insights to the reader on the backdrop of the war, the role of the Navy, deployment of forces and the various 'versions' of the events from a purely neutral point of view. A veteran of the 1971 War himself, the General was wounded in the Battle at Sylhet in Bangladesh and retired in 1993 as COS of a Corps in the East.

The inaction of the Indian Navy during the Indo-Pak War of 1965 was a huge dent on the Navy's reputation. However, the 1971 War was a 'Godsent' opportunity to make amends for the much impaired image of the Navy. The Naval Chief, Admiral Nanda, made his intentions clear when he told his C-in- Cs, "Seek and destroy all enemy warships", and the rest was history. The daring attack on Karachi by the Missile Boats and the sinking of PNS Ghazi are events which have been immortalised in the annals of Indian Naval history.

At the outset, a Naval Officer might view an Army Officer's interest in relating a pure seafarer's tale with suspicion, but the slightest hint of scepticism is laid to rest as this book unfolds. The main highlight of this book is the fact that the author does not boast of the prowess of our mariners, nor does he recount tales of our exploits. A post mortem of the past events is essential to learn from our, as well as the adversary's mistakes. Our vintage Blackwood ASW Frigates, Khukri and Kirpan were pitted against a powerful underwater adversary comprising three Daphne Class submarines, Hangor, Shushuk and Mangro. The stories by the surviving Officers and Sailors provide startling revelations about the gaping flaws in planning such a mission. The narratives by Mrs Rekha Sharma, Mrs Sudha Mulla and her daughter, Ms Ameeta Mulla, stir the emotions of the reader with their honest account of how war reversed the course of their lives and caused impermeable changes in the character of individuals.

The author explains how the war panned out as per Colonel Fuller's Principles of War and finally debates the British tradition of yore for the Captain to go down with the ship. This book is recommended reading for all those who ignorantly ask the question, 'What was the Indian Navy doing during the 1971 War' ?

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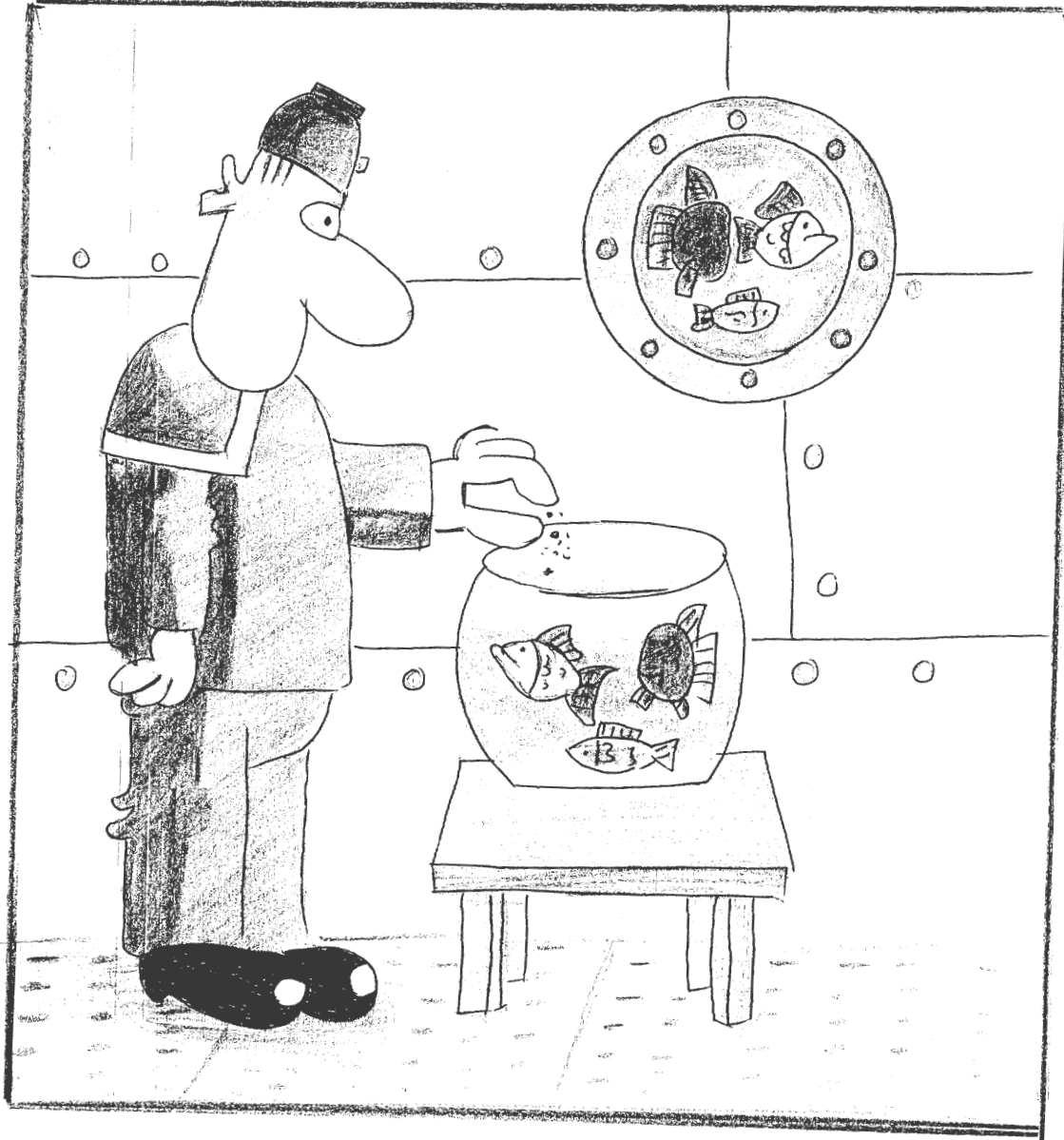
### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



Lt Ashwin Maratt is an alumnus of National Defence Academy and got commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 Jul 07. A qualified Chetak Pilot, he is presently appointed on board INS Sandhayak.

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“ Don't be nervous my dear fishy, you are  
Safe inside my boat ”

- A Submariner feeding fish Inside a submarine

By Sub Lt. S.S. Rao

