

JOURNEY FROM RGUKT TO INDIAN AIR FORCE

A cheerful and lively student of class 8, with mind full of multiple dreams about future. One fine day during an hindi lecture, teacher asked her suddenly, “what do u want to become in future ? “, without thinking for a second she answered boldly, “I want to become a soldier”. This prophecy which was unintentional, is true today as I, Flight Lieutenant Shivapriya serving my nation as Technical Officer in Indian Air Force.

I joined Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, Temple of Learning, in October 2009. From the day I joined, I have one thing clear in my mind that I would work on something where my technical acumen is made use of. And the motivation was to excel in studies. With the same zeal opted Electronics and Communication Engineering. Under the guidance of able mentors and instructors I understood that apart from studies and scores there are many things which are counted upon. I started off giving presentations, talks and visits at different colleges and institutes with friends this boosted my confidence as we were able to make our mark there too.

During our 4th year 1st semester, Army Officers’ visited our campus for conducting University Entry Scheme Program. Though they didn’t offer it for girls, they gave a presentation of how to go about defense services and opportunities available for girls. It was an eye opening session for many of us and dreams of my childhood flashed in front of me. I was excited and cleared the exam in the same year. At the time of bidding good bye to college I had two options one is software job in CAPGEMINI and other is SSB interview call letter(One of the toughest selection boards for defense services in world).

As soon as I reached home , began the preparation for SSB at home with some books suggested by seniors and friends. After reading a book “SSB interview by Nagarajan”, I realized that I am at zero. Without a second thought I joined coaching center “CAVALIER INSTITUTE”. I got to know there that defense services is not a job it’s a way life. I accepted the challenge and with all set for SSB (Service Selection Board) reached Mysore Railway station. A total of 165 girl candidates have arrived for selection and first feeling as a girl was, out of 165 candidates I was the only with traditional attire. I felt uncomfortable and hesitant in talking to others.

INTERVIEW::

Cleared first day’s exam and group discussion which was on a painting of a little boy. This is to test how one analyses the situation with realistic possibilities and make a story out of it where everyone is in agreement with. Too tough a task in that bunch of unknown people, but I was clear that I should either start or conclude the session. I performed the later efficiently. 65 out of 165 screened in on day one

Next 3 day interview session was waiting for us. SSB is a test where what u do, speak and act are matched. They look for a perfect recipe nothing less and nothing more.. Whole process of SSB is divided into 3 categories Psychology tests, ground tests and Interview. I sailed through the tests maintaining the zeal and focus. On the D- Day, my heart was throbbing, names were being announced and I made it. That day I experienced that hardwork and determination pays off, no one can deny it from you.

Interview is followed by medicals which was another hurdle. Crossed it with ups and downs, then came the real fear that is merit list. Many make upto conference but merit is based on ranking. Marking system of SSB is treated as top secret one can't even estimate their ranking. So, I planned my backup and joined M.tech in Osmania University. (same I told in my interview). Finally, received call letter to join Air Force Academy, where a civilian is molded into a soldier with rigorous training.

TRAINING ::

Terrorists attacked Air Force Station Pathankot on the same day of my joining academy. I don't know whether it affected any of the operations in India, but it had a direct impact on our training. The moment we joined academy we lost our fundamental rights given by Indian Constitution. We were being taught from very basics of how to walk, speak, dine and behave with continuous surveillance of our seniors. We had classes in the morning but mostly physical training by seniors by which a bond develops between the coursemates, sense of responsibility towards each other, unity and team work. Because we are trained for a war, and war is never fought alone its team effort. A soldier steps forward either to kill or to die only with the trust on his buddy behind him.

During initial phase physical training is given more importance. First day, I took 13 minutes to run 2 kms and was exhausted (this is one of the tests only). It was a shock and also gave a wide view of forthcoming training. We were being trained in different aspects of military leadership. The main motto is to improvise and channelize the officer like qualities which we already have it in us as we cleared SSB. We are made capable of handling men and machines to be ready at any given point of time.

Time flown away and we were towards end of our training the testing time has started again. And this time I finished my run in 7 minutes. This time also it was a shock to see such an improvement in me. And we turned into soldiers. After training of one more year in technical aspects, I was commissioned as an officer in Indian Air Force. This day I fulfilled my dreams of working technically and also serving nation which brings meaning to my life on earth. Best compliment I received from my parents is "you are not our daughter, now you belong to nation first ". If I had chosen other option, I might have earned money, luxury and many more but at the

end of my life I will be wrapped in national flag. That's the salute from my country to me. This motivates me to render my services honestly and restlessly.