

Alumni Speaks

1. How would you like to introduce yourself and do tell us about your current position ?

Ans. I am Commander S Venkatesh Kumar. I am an alumnus of the TCE 2005batch from the CSE department. I am a Naval Aviator and a Flying Instructor. I joined Indian Naval Academy on 11 July 2005 after completing my graduation from TCE. I was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 January 2007 after initial training. I have nearly 2,500 hrs of military flying experience. In my military career spanning over 18 years, I have served onboard various frontline warships and air squadrons of the Indian Navy. I also served as Military Advisor to the United Nations on behalf of the Government of India and was deputed to Somalia for two years. Currently, I am serving as Second-in-Command of a frontline warship of the Indian Navy.

2. What encouraged you to walk on your professional path ? What has been the journey like ?

Ans. Every individual is different and it is important to identify one's own strengths and weaknesses. Very few are blessed to end up in their dream profession and I am one of the lucky few. I always had a deep commitment to contribute in nationbuilding as well as a passion to fly. As a military pilot, I am glad that I can play a part in fulfilling both. I was fortunate to get the right guidance from the Padma Shri Dr. R Vasudevan who shaped my thinking enormously and enabled me to listen to my inner calling. Though I was placed in Cognizant Technology Solutions (CTS) as part of the campus interview by the end of my third year of engineering, I pursued my interest and passion for becoming a military pilot. Today, I am extremely satisfied and content that I could become a Naval Aviator and live my dream.

The journey in the Indian Armed Forces has been exciting. The quality of life, training and experience be it professional or personal, has been exemplary in the Indian Navy. The exposure to various military operations ranging from military roles to lifesaving missions, visiting various countries, participating in multi-national military exercises involving foreign navies, and serving in the United Nations is something that only Indian Navy can offer.

3. How do you think TCE has contributed to your growth and building a successful career ?

Ans. TCE has played a pivotal role in what I am today. Graduation and obtaining a

degree is just one part and that can be achieved from various avenues. However, the TCE shaped my personality, laid strong foundations of ethical standards and played a central role in building my character. It provided me with value-based education. I believe that this is the true education for one's life and the TCE provided me the values that have made me successful both professionally and in my personal life.

4. Looking back, what is the one lesson Take-away from TCE, that still helps you in everyday life ?

Ans. The one lesson that has been a foundation for my life and in my everyday activities is none other than the very slogan of our TCE "Where quality and ethics matter". The importance of quality

of work and ethics in the military cannot be overemphasized. High ethical standards in personal and professional conduct are key to leading your men into the battle and coming out victorious. Similarly, the quality of work is not only important for performance but as well a mandatory aspect for very survival since the life of your own self and your comrades is at stake on a near-daily basis.

As a military leader involved in motivating and maintaining the high morale of my subordinates, I practice the very motto of the TCE on a daily basis namely the high standards of ethics and quality of work.

5. Any message or advice that you would like to share with the students at TCE ?

Ans. My first advice to the students is to have high levels of integrity. When I say integrity, the first person to whom you should be true is to your own self. Do the job in your hand to the best of your abilities. Be it a class test, semester final exams, helping your own friend in studies or arranging for an Industrial visit or any other tasks that may come your way have the highest levels of integrity. This will enable you to perform your tasks to the best of your abilities and also give you the ability to say ‘no’ to the tasks that you feel are beyond your capabilities. Being true to yourself will make you choose the right profession for yourself rather than being under social pressure of choosing a particular profession.

Your only competition is only your own self and every day be better than what you were yesterday be it professionally, academically or as a person.

The second important piece of advice is to read a wide variety of books. Other than your professional books, pick up one book of your choice be it Indian history, or even fiction, classics or political history/ wars etc. Try to read at least 15-20 pages a day. Think widely and accept different points of views. This will give you a better skillset to work in a diverse cultural environment and emerge as a leader.

As said by famous author Mr. F. Scott Fitzgerald, “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.”

Only a wide readership will enable you to consider various possibilities and yet continue to work towards your goal. From academic research to the battlefield, I personally feel, this quality of yours will enable you to lead your team to success.