



**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**  
**CDR VIJAY VARMA (04799-F)**

Cdr Vijay Varma (04799-F) has been working as Staff QI in INS Garuda since 11 Aug 2016. In August 2018 severe and cataclysmic floods inundated large parts of Kerala leaving thousands of people stranded across the state. During “Op Madad”, the officer as the pilot in command of a Chetak aircraft rescued a total of **24** survivors including **02 pregnant ladies**. Out of these, two rescue missions stand out due to the unprecedented skill, valor and grit displayed by the Officer whilst flying in extremely hostile conditions. On 17 August 2018, as Pilot-in-Command, the officer was tasked with the rescue involving a critical medical emergency of a pregnant woman stuck at a Masjid whose water had broken and was in labour. The heavily populated area was completely inundated and hover was extremely risky due to multiple obstructions on site including power lines, tall trees and the minarets of the Masjid. The rescue was further complicated as the only place available for winching operations was a small balcony that was partially covered by a tin sheet. This being a **life and death situation** the Officer decided to go ahead with the mission despite the dangers posed by the severely restricted area and adverse weather conditions of low clouds, intermittent rain and gusting winds. The Officer through sheer grit and skill positioned over the small balcony. Skilfully maintaining a steady hover for prolonged duration in extremely challenging conditions, a total of five winching operations were carried out whilst keeping clear of obstructions and battling gusts at the limits of the aircraft’s capability. The rescue was affected with clockwork precision and the survivor was airlifted to INS Garuda. The lady delivered a **healthy baby boy within two hours of the rescue**. This incident garnered high praise for the Indian Navy’s relief operations and led to wide acclaim. At 1000 hrs on 17 Aug 18 affected the rescue of another heavily pregnant woman along with an old woman and child who were trapped on the roof of a house in the same vicinity. Despite gusting winds from an approaching thunderstorm and multiple obstructions including a coconut tree above the level of the hovering helicopter the officer fearlessly manoeuvred the aircraft and executed a safe rescue. For

these exemplary acts of bravery and selfless service in the face of life threatening conditions, Cdr Vijay Varma, 04799-F has been awarded **Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)**.



**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**

**CDR T ANUP KUMAR (04356-Z)**

Cdr T Anup Kumar(04356-Z) has been working as Chief Manager (FTC) in NAY (Kochi) since 08 May 16. He has been serving at NAY(Kochi) since May 2016, spear heading the Flight Test Centre literally and figuratively. The officer is not only an accomplished Chetak pilot but also a fearless one and it is largely due to his doughtiness that the Yard has been able to turn around Chetak Production from a meagre **04** in 2014–15 to **08** in 2015 – 16; **12** in 2016 – 17 and again **12** in 2017 – 18. When a flying machine is as old as the Chetak, the pilot has to call upon his pluck as much as his professional knowledge and flying skills to undertake production flying which the officer has displayed in ample measure during the last two years at this Aircraft Yard. God's own Land, Kerala, witnessed some of the most horrific scenes during the unprecedented floods which ravaged the state very recently, and whose fury was aggravated by incessant rains over prolonged periods that threatened safety of all major dams with rivers overflowing their banks and destroying everything in their paths. It was under these trying conditions, NAY was asked to roll out as many aircraft to bolster SAR operations being undertaken on a mammoth scale by Southern Naval Command. IN 455 had been handed over to the Yard for T2SI and was a flying helicopter albeit with MGB frame having life expired. Through the ingenuity of the ATO and proactive support of HQSNC / CATO, the helicopter was made available for flying, however, such an evolution was being undertaken for the first time and required raw courage and grit to fly the helo. Post accord of extension to the MGB frame, the officer evaluated the aircraft for relief operations on 17 Aug 18 and volunteered immediately to participate in relief operations. On 18 Aug 18 whilst on a relief mission sortie, the officer observed a group of 15-20 people marooned atop on a small bridge seeking food and water desperately. The officer along with his co-pilot, Lt Cdr Jaiswal of Jamuna flight assessed the situation quickly and went towards the bridge and succeeded in reaching food and water to the stranded personnel safely despite presence of electric cables on both sides and minimal rotor tip clearance. Whilst on their return leg even as the next consignment of

relief materials was being dropped, the officer observed that amongst the large number of flood affected personnel assembled atop a three storey building, there was one lady in advanced stage of pregnancy. Without any consideration for personal safety, the officer marshalled his crew and managed to fly the helo into a position lower than the adjoining building to pick up this lady along with another elderly one needing emergency medical assistance. Even as this mission was being undertaken, the roof sheets of adjoining buildings began vibrating violently and were on the verge of being dislodged. The rotors of the helo were in close proximity to the building side walls and even a slight lateral movement would have been catastrophic. It was primarily due to the officer's sheer grit, determination, his sense of duty coupled with enormous flying skill, that both the ladies could be winched up safely and brought to Sanjivani in the shortest possible time. The expecting mother later delivered a healthy baby despite the umbilical cord being entwined around the child's neck. The officer has thus displayed tremendous commitment whilst undertaking the relief operations during the period of deployment. His act has been an outstanding exhibition of courage, professionalism and flying skill which resulted in rescuing a total of 15 survivors and delivery of nearly 2000 kg of relief materials over 11 hrs of tireless flying which is in keeping with highest traditions of Indian Navy. Cdr T Anup Kumar 04356-Z has been awarded **Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)**.



**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**

**CDR HARI GOVIND R (04387-W)**

Cdr Hari Govind (04387-W) is Commanding INAS 322 since 28 Mar 18. On the night of 13 Jun 18, the officer displayed extraordinary courage in conditions of clear and present danger whilst affecting MEDEVAC off Merchant Vessel Nu-Shi Nalini in torrential rains in near absolute darkness. At about 1830 hrs, INAS 322 was tasked to evacuate a victim of an Engine room explosion onboard a merchant vessel that was anchored 15 miles West of Kochi. Being the only night qualified pilot in the squadron and his own experience being limited, the officer took it upon himself to undertake the mission. To obviate further delay in rescue, he opted to get airborne in torrential rains. On approaching the stricken ship, the officer assessed that the engine room explosion had left the ship without power and propulsion enveloping the ship in complete darkness making the impending winching operation an extremely hazardous one. The identification of a suitable winching point on the deck became critical for the success of the mission in the marginal conditions prevalent. With the NVG's rendered unusable in view of the torrential rain, the deck was painstakingly scanned using aircraft landing light. By about 2030 hrs, the surface units deployed by SNC had affected R/V and expressed inability to lower boat due to heavy sea state, very heavy rains and extremely poor visibility. With air rescue now being the only option available, the officer displayed exceptional courage and selflessness in going ahead with the rescue operation despite adverse conditions. The ships upper deck was packed with pipelines and assessed unsuitable for winching operations. The only other possibility for winching was from the highly restricted bridge wings. On his instructions the patient was shifted to the bridge wings and utilizing his superior piloting skills and professional knowledge he established the aircraft in high hover on the Port side of the bridge wing. With the ship rolling about 15 to 20 degrees and visibility limited to only the spot illuminated by the aircraft landing light, manual hover was established at 175 feet. The aircraft hovering at this height, whilst keeping sufficiently clear of obstructions, resulted in uncontrollable swing of the Rescue Basket rendering winching impossible. The officer took the extremely difficult decision of reducing the aircraft height to only 125 feet over the deck displaying courage and skill to

maintain the aircraft at hover for 35 mins at a very marginal 15 feet clearance from the mast head light. Due to the violent swing of the rescue basket repeated attempts had to be made to land the basket on the bridge wing. On one such attempt the basket entangled with the guard rail. The officer displayed nerves of steel and opted against cutting the cable whilst maintain hover thereby providing the winch operator time to force the basket loose. In torrential rains and near zero visibility the officer took extreme risk to undertake medical evacuation of a grievously injured crew from a merchant ship. Such an act has never been performed by the Advanced Light Helicopter and the officer's courage has served towards expanding the operational footprint of the aircraft. During this MEDVAC officer displayed an act of exceptional courage during torrential rains in absolutely darkness, Cdr Hari Govind R, 04387-W has been awarded **Nau Sena Medal (Gallantry)**.



**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**

**LT CDR MANU MISHRA (06671-K)**

Lt Cdr Manu Mishra (06671-K)r has been working as Prahar Commander in INS Karna since 16 Sep 16, At about 1300 Hrs on 15 June 18, a directive was received by the Unit form HQENC regarding urgent deployment of a Marine Commando Buddy Pair to INS Dega for onward deployment to Kalaikunda to prevent grounding of MV SSL Kolkata, which had caught fire, and was adrift at sea. The Ship's Cargo included toxic chemicals and had been abandoned by her crew. The Officer, as ever, rose to the occasion and volunteered for the mission. The Officer's tasking was to avert a major ecological disaster by leading a Joint Team of the Navy and the Ship's Crew to prevent the Vessel from running aground. A Seaking 42 C helicopter was tasked to ferry the team onboard the Vessel. On 16 Jun, as the helicopter approached the Vessel, in situ appreciation indicated unsuitability of the weather deck for personnel deployment, due to high temperatures caused by the raging fire onboard. Inclement weather, strong winds and random explosions further exacerbated mission complexity. At this juncture, the Officer realized that a no go would surely result in a major ecological disaster. With utter disregard to personnel safety, he volunteered to winch onboard the distressed vessel and assess feasibility thereon. As he was being winched down, explosions continued; unfazed, he continued with the mission. Once on deck, the professionally astute and audacious Officer quickly analysed the scenario, and using a Thermal Imaging Camera identified a safe spot onboard the distressed vessel for landing of other team members. He maneuvered the team to the forecastle of the ship and kept them motivated till the task of letting go of the anchor was achieved successfully. Once it was ascertained that the anchor was holding and the drift arrested, he ensured safe extraction of all team members, before winching out himself. He led from front and assisted all other members for their safe landing and kept their morale high in the prevailing treacherous condition while the ship was on fire,

adrift with heavy sea tossing the unmanned ship. On successfully achieving firm anchoring of the drifting and abandoned ship, he also ensured safe winch up of his team mates. He was the first man in and the last man out from the stricken ship which shows his exceptional courage, leadership and sense of duty. The officer's act has displayed amply his exceptional courage, leadership and sense of commitment. His selfless act is in keeping with the highest traditions of the Navy, for which Lt Cdr Manu Mishra, (06671-K) has been awarded **Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)**.





**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**

**AMIT, NA I (FD), NO. 233675-F**

1. Amit, NA I (FD) No 233675-F has been working as Flight Diver in INS Sutlej since 02 Feb 18. HQ Southern Naval Command launched operation Madad for assisting Kerala administration and undertaking disaster relief operations due to unprecedented flooding experienced in many parts of state, owing to incessant rainfall and release of excess water from Idukki and other dams. He was deployed on board Chetak helicopter for SAR & evacuation of flood victims displayed unprecedented valour and grit in saving the lives of **23 stranded survivors**. These rescues were carried out as follows:-

(a) At 0630 hrs on 16 Aug 18, he was tasked as a free diver for SAR mission. He was lowered into the flood affected area to rescue four severely affected ladies and one three year old child, who were severely ill since past two days.

(b) At 0700 hrs on 17 Aug 18 he was tasked as free diver for an SAR mission in flood hit area. He rescued seven ladies and two children which included a pregnant lady who later delivered a healthy baby boy at INHS Sanjivani. He, while rescuing a five year old child among the survivors, effectively assessed the circumstances and utilized the ingenious technique of carrying the child in his arms which he had devised the previous day.

(c) Continuing with the ops on 18 Aug 18 at 0830 hrs, the sailor was tasked as the winch operator for the mission. As winch operator, he rescued five survivors & valiantly carried out the recovery of the pregnant lady again in the demanding conditions with immense grit and determination despite the inclement conditions.

(d) At 0700 hrs on 19 Aug 18, the sailor was tasked as winch operator to rescue four survivors. Amit, considering the plight of the situation volunteered for the mission, with scant

regard for personal safety during rescue operations amidst a severe weather conditions, heavy rain and flood, He displayed remarkable valour, calm, skill, and resilience of an exceptional order whilst rescuing 23 survivors.

2. The sailor spear headed in rescue work as leader of the team and his citation brings out amply **individual** conspicuous act of courage to consider him for the Gallantry Award. The sailor contributed substantially in rescuing seven ladies and two children including pregnant lady who was in labour which do indicate his selfless and high resolve to provide assistance which are in keeping with the highest traditions of Service. These exemplary acts of bravery in the face of life threatening conditions beyond the call of duty are in line with the highest traditions of the Indian Navy. For these unprecedented acts of selfless service in the face of danger, Amit, NA I (FD) 233675-F has been awarded **Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)**.



**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**  
**PRAMENDRA KUMAR, CPO (CD), 122271-R**

The sailor has been working as Diving Supervisor/Dog Handler in CCDT(K) since May 15. The sailor reported to CCDT (Kochi) on 20 May 15. The citation highlights the role played by the above sailor during **OP MADAD** undertaken in the state of Kerala in Aug 2018, following widespread flooding in multiple districts, consequent to opening of Dams in the high ranges. The District Administration, Ernakulam had sought presence of a rescue diving team on 07 Aug 18, to meet any emergent flooding situation at Aluva, anticipating Dam gates being opened in view of excessive rains. Accordingly 02 diving teams led by the sailor were deployed on 09 Aug 18 at Aluva. The incessant rain forced the administration to open the dam gates PM 15 Aug 18, thereby causing floods in most of the district. The task of the team started when District Collector Ernakulam Mr. K Mohammed Shafirulla directed his team to proceed to Pizhala Island, the worst affected area, for rescue operations. After being dropped at the island, the sailor took the lead and drove his Gemini (inflatable craft) across the seven islands viz, Pizhala, Kadamkudi, Moolamvelli, Kothad, Periyamthruuth, Cheriyaamthurath and Chennur. This step by the sailor was a ray of hope for the people who saw the naval boat in the islands. His operation started when he rescued **04** fishing boats with faulty Out Board Motors from drifting in the strong currents. Applying timely presence of mind he towed all the four boats closer to the shore, thereby securing them safely with no loss of life. With the heavy downpour and the strong currents the islands were completely flooded under more than two feet of water, forcing the local population to leave their homes. Once again, Pramendra Kumar CPO(CD) took the initiative and undertook several trips in his Gemini, firstly to locate marooned people and then to rescue them. P Kumar CPO(CD) rescued a total of **1459** people which included small children, aged people, pregnant women and sick personnel. In all he undertook 07 late night operations and continued the rescue till the last person was evacuated. All these were undertaken in conditions where no other rescue effort was possible. The sailor and his team carried out these night operations until 20 Aug18, themselves surviving on bread and pickle to eat. The fearless and determined approach, experience and positive attitude of Pramendra Kumar, during those nights

proved instrumental in saving innumerable lives among the local populace. His team was the only hope for the public affected by flooded homes and rapid currents. His efforts have earned him a written appreciation by the Ernakulam District collector apart from the people he saved. The operations undertaken under the leadership of Pramendra Kumar CPO CD enhanced the image of the Indian navy among the local populace, administration and media. For his timely and courageous leadership resulting in saving 1459 marooned people around Pizhala Islands, Pramendra Kumar, CPO (CD), 122271-R has been awarded **Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry)**.



**NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY)**  
**LT CDR SHIRISH SHIVNATH PAVALE, (06242-K)**

Lieutenant Commander Shirish Shivnath Pavale, (06242-K) is the Training Officer of INS Abhimanyu since 27 Jun 16. On 02 Mar 18, a piracy incident at sea was reported to the unit and four Prahars were launched with the Officer as Team Commander. The intelligence revealed that the pirates were armed and were underway necessitating opposed boarding. The Officer displaying excellent leadership, tactical acumen, raw courage and professionalism led a successful Maritime Interdiction Operation by MARCOS. He coordinated the key elements of actionable intelligence and executed a meticulously planned SF operation involving complete synergy among participating forces. The operation was launched at midnight on 03 Mar 18 with complete surprise and stealth. During the assault, Officer led from the front and was the first to board the vessel. The Pirate Leader was armed and present in the wheel house at the time of boarding. Neutralising him was the single most critical part of the entire operation. The Officer along with his buddy overpowered the Pirate leader in the initial few seconds of the operation with utter disregard to his personal safety. The swift assault by the Officer prevented the pirate from using his weapon thereby eliminating a firefight. The Officer's unprecedented action resulted in seizing control of the vessel. The Officer thereafter led his team to rescue the crew, who once located, were moved to safety and the entire operation was successfully completed. The execution of this Maritime Interdiction Operation was an example of copy book professionalism. The officer led a successful Maritime Interdiction Operation by MARCOS. His quick action and coordination with the key elements of intelligence and execution of plan led the overpowering of armed pirate leader on time and team was able to execute successful rescue of crew. The officer displayed exceptional leadership, daring act and led from the front. For displaying resolute courage, exemplary leadership, inspiring professionalism and total disregard for personal safety, Lieutenant Commander Shirish Shivnath Pavale (06242-K) has been awarded **award of "NAUSENA MEDAL(GALLANTRY)"**.

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