Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

It was heartening to note that the highest ranked General officer of the Armed Forces Medical Services has paid a memorable tribute to the backbone of the medical services, viz. the paramedical soldiers, airmen and sailors.¹ The recent media focus on the Siachen glacier has clearly brought out that our nursing assistants are deployed in extremely inhospitable terrain where they not only fight the vagaries of nature but also do a commendable job in providing medical care to the soldiers, thus contributing greatly to morale.² Sepoy/nursing assistant Suryavanshi Sunil V. of 410 Field Hospital gave the supreme sacrifice at Sonam Post at 19,600 feet during the recent avalanche, along with his brethren from the fighting arms.

In this connection, it is pertinent to recall the valour of a Class III Nursing Assistant Sep Ram Sewak Ojha, who threw caution to the winds to save the life of a JCO of 8 JAKLI at Bilafond La when the post was attacked by the enemy on 23 October 1987. He was severely injured and was awarded the Sena Medal (Gallantry) for the same.³

However, such cases of recognition of the paramedical workers of our Corps are not too many, despite the great job done by a vast majority. It has been correctly brought out by the author that most remain 'unsung heroes' and this reflects poorly on our system wherein most of the decorations are awarded to the officer cadre. Hopefully, with this article, the message will go down to the rank and file of our Corps that we need to initiate more citations of our paramedical workers so that they get what is deservedly theirs.

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Reply

Dear Editor,

It is indeed heartening to see the interest evinced by the said article in the readers' mind. The reader has echoed my thoughts that the paramedics of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) need to be recognized and appreciated more often for the yeoman services rendered by them. Deployed and serving alongside their brethren of other arms and services, the paramedics often have to face the harshest of conditions and occasionally lose life or limb in the tour of duty. Perhaps it is onus of the medical officers at every level to sensitize the respective commanders about the exemplary work being rendered by the paramedics. It may be the RMO advising his Unit CO or the Commanding Officer of Military Hospital/Field Hospital advising the respective Corp/Army Commander. But it is indeed a duty of the medical officer to project the good

work being done by the paramedics under his command and to ensure that supporting citations are sent in timely manner. Apart from bolstering the morale of the rank and file, such measures will go a long way in promoting the good image of the AFMS in general.

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