



LONG RANGE PATROLS (LRP)

Many of us officers and men have seen operational service along our Northern and Eastern Borders. To maintain vigil along these vast, rugged mountainous borders, we have trudged along on LRPs, carrying a rucksack full

of provisions and spare clothing. These LRPs ranged from seven days to 20 plus days, at times for up to a month. Notwithstanding the rigours and hardships, the LRPs gave us vivid memories of walking through dense bamboo jungles, and tackling the blood sucking leeches. Lit cigarette butts and salt were the prized weapons to tackle these silent parasites. While walking through these forests, we sometimes spotted a leech stuck on the neck of the comrade in front of us, and the quick anti-leech drill took care of the menace. At times, we were caught in downpours, and had to slog on with the heavy rain drenching us, while leeches fell down on our burly frames along with twigs and slush. To add to the happy situation, the tracks would turn slippery, with

water channels running along the tracks, as we waded through them. After a hard day's walk on one such LRP, our 'band of brothers' halted for the night – as I removed my soggy jungle boots, I found myself gazing at 'red socks'. A couple of leeches had been at work, and the cigarette butt was immediately lit. Fortunately, the blood loss was not too serious, and I could continue on the LRP. As I look back at those times, we were never disheartened or distressed, in fact our young minds considered these as challenges, and we were filled with a sense of accomplishment after an LRP. We saw new

areas, new meadows, new pastures and nature at its pristine best along the slopes of the Himalayas. There was cool mountain breeze to fill our lungs with sheer joy, and at times icy cold winds made our teeth chatter. At times, we trudged across snowclad slopes. Our hill troops were masters in 'living off the land', and fresh bamboo shoots were expertly cooked - an exceptionally delicious vegetable to rejuvenate tired limbs. All in all, the Indian soldier takes such perils in his stride. I recall a famous credo in the Commando Wing at Belagavi, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". **An apt description for the Men Of Steel of the Indian Army.** ■ - *The Editor*



DON'T ENVY A MAN HIS MEDALS

Don't envy a man his medals
All those ribbons on his chest
He did not try to get them
They're not there at his request

They were earned in stinking hell holes
Where no man would like to go
Or in cold and wintry places
Where there's only ice and snow

He did not know he earned them
Till they were awarded at parade
And they were bright when he first got them
But in time the colors fade

He was told he had to wear them
And to wear them all with pride
But when the memories come to haunt him
Those same medals make him hide

Cause those medals will not bring back
All those guys he left behind
And he would trade them all forever
For a little peace of mind

So don't envy a man his medals
You don't want to take his place
Thinking back to long gone battles
And meeting dead friends face to face

■ - *Anonymous*