Indian Air Force (IAF) has Air Warriors in its ranks to fulfil the aspirations and the objectives reposed by the nation. History of IAF is replete with innumerable instances of unflinching commitment and dedication to the security and prosperity of our great country, written with the sweat and blood of the devoted air warriors. Every citizen is indebted to this great force in some form or the other, be it confronting the enemy or standing up to render timely help to its brethren in need. Beyond these published stories of valour and saga of the Air Force as a whole, there are day to day happenings and occurrences at every Air Force base that highlights the thrills and dangers, the highs and lows, professionalism, and beyond doubt the deep bonding among the Air Warriors. This article salutes the untiring and unflinching dedication to duty rendered by air warriors. Each member of the Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine would have his or her own experiences to narrate as squadron doctors. Beyond doubt the sentiments underlying these experiences would almost be universal.

The IAF is the finest example of teamwork where the team made up of Air Warriors from varied fields ensures that a fully prepared machine is launched with the pilot whose focus is the mission alone. The rest of the team understands, with great sense of responsibility the hazards that he is about to undertake. He is fully prepared for deprivation, privation and fatigue which are the hallmark of all warriors. A doctor in the military aviation is not only the healer but also a friend and mother to keep the esprit de corps and be partner through thick and thin of Air Warriors life.

This is a tribute to the spirit of the IAF air warrior from brother-in-arms. The squadron doctor is witness to the amazing, often incredible display of courage, passion, zeal and professionalism rendered by IAF aircrew, ground personnel and their families in a variety of situations. It feels paradoxically, both proud and insignificant to be part of a service where many a man (and woman) stand tall… really tall.

To the Aerospace Medicine specialist, the basis of this bonding stems from a closer appreciation of the aviators profession, the knowledge of the intense personal courage it takes to plan for and execute every single mission, the time critical nature of the profession, where a few milliseconds late or early is not acceptable, a profession where there is no prize for the runners up. The professionalism with which each such mission is achieved while being aware of the unforgiving nature of the real stresses of aviation is the highest gift a nation can expect from any of its citizens. To do it every day, with élan, elegance and equanimity, as if by rote is a marvel in itself. Being in the presence of such professionals is to be in the presence of courage and valour, personified. The country has been witness to such innumerable acts of bravery when these IAF sons of India step up to meet the challenge be it in war or natural calamity. What many of us are oblivious to is the fact that young officers in their twenties commit these acts of unprecedented courage every single day, not all of them in the face of war or in aid of civil power.

As we tentatively tread into the Squadron, the care and concern of the ‘big family’ of matters trivial, the affection of persons otherwise separated by religion, language and seniority, the joy expressed on individuals’ gains, the anguish felt in each others distress, the taste of ‘Indian Food’ that transcends regions, the healthy respect for each others beliefs and customs, the concern when a working spouse is off on a duty, the celebrations of all festivals, birthdays, anniversaries, the matches played against the rival Squadron and the common celebrations after the match! Each of these individual events create a ‘mental state’ so unique, it’s impossible to be expressed in words.

Over the years, the family increases in dimensions, involves units and stations and in time the spirit of Indian Air Force becomes all pervasive, as deep-rooted as deep can be, as natural as nature can be. To be able to feel this special bondage with this great organisation is in itself a reward for one’s existence. This feeling is not learnt behavior, its not training, and its not passive acceptance. It is this healthy respect for
the profession of aviation that urges us to do our best in supporting, in understanding, in helping this
spirited individual in every possible way. So, while we assemble here to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of
the Indian Air Force and Golden Jubilee of the Institute of Aerospace Medicine, we like to place on
record that all our small achievements emanate from the sense of belonging to the Indian Air Force. On
behalf of all of us in the medical services, we offer tribute to the indomitable spirit of the Indian Air Force.