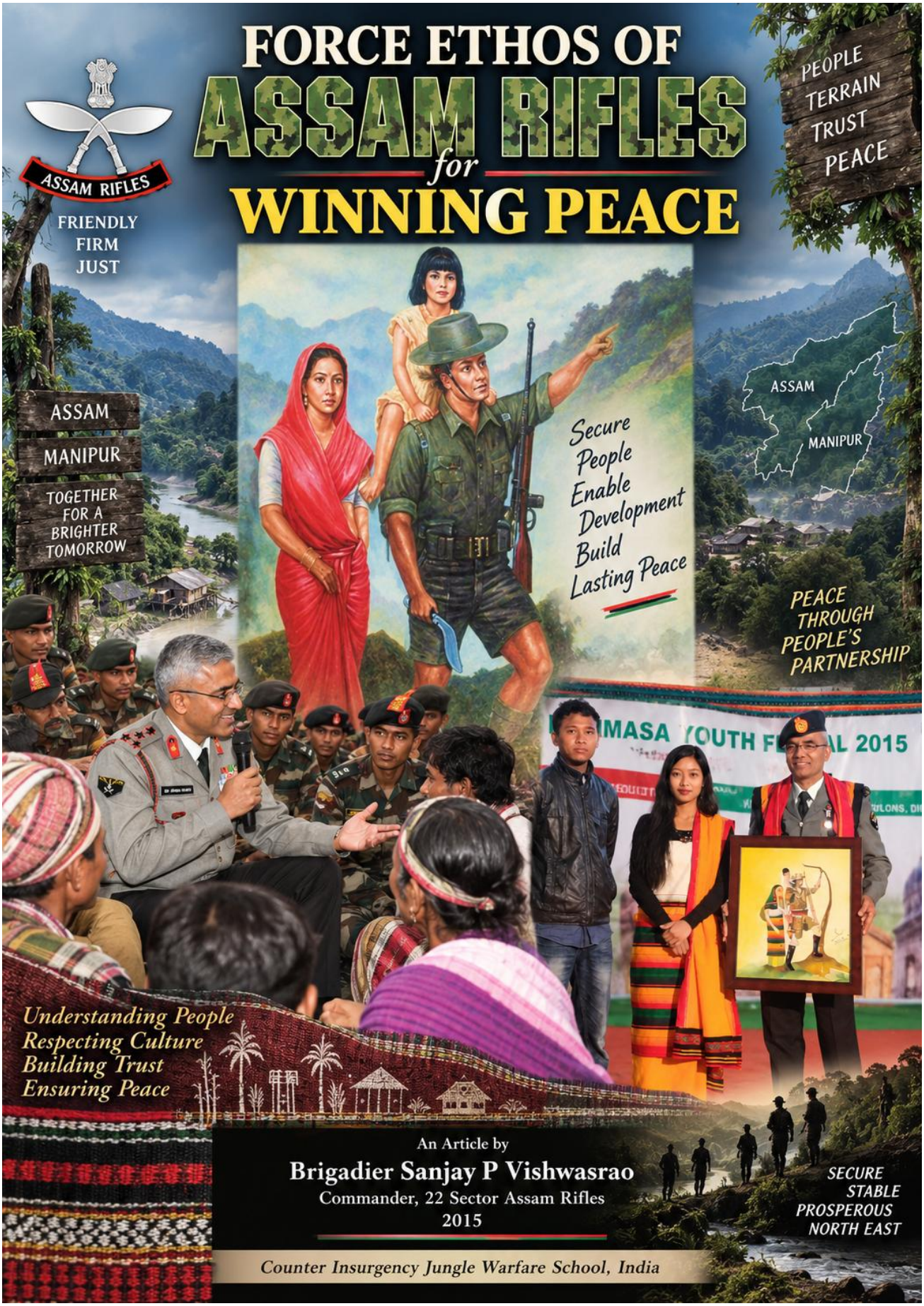

FORCE ETHOS OF
ASSAM RIFLES
for
WINNING PEACE
ASSAM RIFLES
FRIENDLY
FIRM
JUST
PEOPLE
TERRAIN
TRUST
PEACE
ASSAM
MANIPUR
TOGETHER FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW
Secure
People
Enable
Development
Build
Lasting Peace
ASSAM
MANIPUR
PEACE THROUGH PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP
Understanding People
Respecting Culture
Building Trust
Ensuring Peace
An Article by
Brigadier Sanjay P Vishwasrao
Commander, 22 Sector Assam Rifles
2015
Counter Insurgency Jungle Warfare School, India
SECURE
STABLE
PROSPEROUS
NORTH EAST

The Dhai Moorti Force Ethos

Originally written in 2015. Adopted in 2026 for a broader audience.

How a Wartime Rescue Became a Living Code of Conduct — and What It Teaches About Company, Customer, Citizen and Devotee-First Ethos

Sanjay P Vishwasrao, Major General, Retired

Written in 2015 as Brigadier, Commander 22 Sector, Assam Rifles, Assam–Manipur, for the Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School.

> *"Ethos is the most effective means of persuasion a person possesses."*
>
> **— Aristotle**



VISION 2020

"To win peace for our Hill People through ethical counter terrorism operations to destroy radicalism, secessionism & terrorism with heartfelt respect for all"

-Brig SP Vishwasrao

Brigadier Sanjay P Vishwasrao briefing Lt Gen RK Rana, Director General Assam Rifles on Vision of 22 Sector Assam Rifles for South Assam and West Manipur, 2015



This quote of President Abdul Kalam is one of the motivating factors behind the strategy of 'All Tribes, One India'.

WHY THIS ANALYSIS CARRIES WEIGHT

This paper was written in 2015 as the author, then commanding 22 Sector, Assam Rifles across Assam and Manipur, turned a static war memorial into a living code of conduct for his riflemen. The resulting 'All Tribes, One India' campaign — built on this Dhai Moorti ethos — went on to help three of four units under his command earn Unit Commendations and 72 soldiers earn gallantry and distinguished-service awards, a record for the Assam Rifles. The clearest proof the message landed came from the community itself: at the 2015 Dimasa Youth Festival, the Dimasa tribe presented the author with their own reinterpretation of the Dhai Moorti — recast with a Dimasa mother and daughter — shown later in this paper.

The History of the Dhai Moorti

The Assam Rifles, raised in 1835 as the Cachar Levy, is India's oldest paramilitary force and carries the motto 'Friends of the Hill People.' The Dhai Moorti — literally 'two and a half figures' — is its best-known memorial: a rifleman of the Assam Rifles is shown escorting a refugee family fleeing Burma ahead of the advancing Japanese army during the Second World War, with a young girl carried on his shoulders counted as the 'half' figure that completes the two and a half. It stands today as the Assam Rifles' own symbol of its dedication to the people of the Northeast.

By 2015, however, most riflemen understood the Dhai Moorti only in the simplest terms — as a reminder of one's own wife and children in the company operating base — rather than as a working code of conduct. How Brigadier Sanjay P Vishwasrao revived it as exactly that, and pairing it with his new symbol of shared identity, 'All Tribes, One India,' is what this paper sets out to do.

Ethos as a Strategic Weapon

Ethos is the distinguishing character, sentiment, moral values and guiding belief of an organisation or an individual — a mindset that runs through

everything the organisation thinks and does. Aristotle held that ethos was the most effective means of persuasion a person possesses. The values a security force instils reflect the values of the nation it serves, and the force's own ethos, in turn, gives those values a face: a credo that reflects the force's mission while staying true to the character and shared beliefs of the people it serves. Force ethos is what ensures every soldier, regardless of rank or role, works toward the mission in keeping with the values the force claims to hold.

In conventional war, a soldier's will matters roughly three times more than his weapon. In Fourth Generation War (4GW), a soldier's force ethos matters roughly ten times more than his will, and twenty times more than his weapon — because a war of ideologies is ultimately won or lost in the minds of the people. Force ethos is therefore the link between tactical engagements aimed at neutralising terrorism and the parallel perception battle for the will, hope and belief of the population. This is the 'Strategic Rifleman Effect': each individual rifleman's tactical conduct carries a strategic weight on the psyche of the people, and so on the duration and outcome of the war itself.

The Mission Behind the Memorial

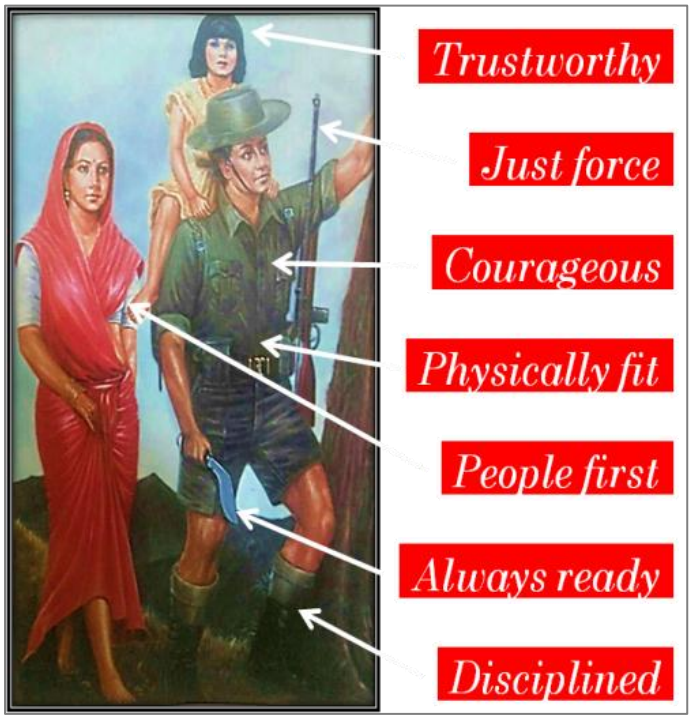
Drawing on the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the mission of the Assam Rifles can fairly be stated as: to win peace for the Hill People through ethical counter-terrorism operations that defeat radicalism, secessionism and terrorism, conducted with heartfelt respect for all. In a contest of ideologies, military victory has to lead to ideological victory and a peace acceptable to everyone. The classical distinctions of just cause (*jus ad bellum*), just conduct (*jus in bello*) and just peace (*jus post bellum*) matter even more here, since culture shapes the ways, means, ends and very notion of victory far more in this kind of conflict. That mission requires the Assam Rifles to hold a force ethos that acts as a genuine force multiplier alongside the rifle and khukri

each soldier already carries — a *jus-in-bello* ethos capable of turning a military win into a peace that actually lasts.

The Dhai Moorti Force Ethos

Bringing the Dhai Moorti to life as a working tool for projecting exactly this kind of ethos gives every 'Friend of the Hill People' a real chance of delivering lasting peace. The proposed creed reads:

> *I am first and foremost a friend of our Hill People. I will always place our people and our mission first. I will keep myself physically fit. I will be self-disciplined and trustworthy toward our Hill People, every time. I will be courageous and face all hardships. I will always be ready for any mission, and will use only just force.*



Dhai Moorti annotated with the seven tenets of the Force Ethos developed for 22 Sector, Assam Rifles.

> *"All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is, the strategy out of which victory is evolved!"*
> -Sun Tzu

First and Foremost, Friend of Our Hill People. Every rifleman has to be a friend of the Hill People before the Hill People can become friends of the Assam Rifles and thus of our Nation. That friendliness has to be built on genuine cultural awareness of the many tribes of the Northeast — the

foundation for a smooth, fast Observe – Orient – Decide – Act (OODA) loop in the field.

People and Mission First. In 4GW, people come before mission — shown in the image as the rifleman leading the woman — because influencing a population's beliefs is only possible once its trust has genuinely been won.

Physically Fit. Good military bearing (stomach in, belt tight) is essential for a rifleman to be a credible messenger of the nation and its values, and physical fitness is equally necessary for executing the mission across the hilly, forested terrain of the Northeast.

Self-Disciplined. An eye for detail — socks pulled up, laces twist-free — signals self-discipline, essential for small teams operating on mission-type orders in demanding terrain and weather, whether the task at hand is winning trust or neutralising terrorists.

Trustworthy. Success in a war of ideologies depends, among other things, on the character of whoever is selling the idea. Every rifleman has to appear, and genuinely be, more trustworthy — shown as the girl child riding on his shoulders — than any radical, secessionist or terrorist. Winning that trust wins the Hill People's minds; as they become the force's own eyes and ears, that same trust makes its OODA loop faster than that of any adversary.

Courageous. A war of ideologies can only be won once the population's minds are free of the opposing side's influence, which makes neutralising terrorism a precondition for both victory and peace — but that neutralising has to hold to jus in bello throughout, which takes real courage (chest out) to persevere while consistently minimising both psychological and physical collateral damage.

Always Ready, with Just Force. 4GW runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, blurring the old lines between soldiers and civilians, weapons and non-

weapons, battlefields and everyday spaces. Winning peace in such a war means every rifleman stays ready around the clock (khukri drawn) while using only the minimum force the moment requires (rifle slung, not raised).

CORPORATE PARALLEL — 'PEOPLE FIRST' WEARS A DIFFERENT NAME IN EVERY SECTOR

'People and mission first' is not a military-only idea — every serious institution states some version of it, and calling it by its sector-specific name is usually the difference between a slogan and an operating discipline. In a corporate setting, it is company ethos: the values every employee is expected to embody before results are even discussed. In an FMCG or consumer business, it is customer-first: designing and selling as though the person buying the product is standing in the room. In a government policy institution, it is citizens-first: treating the public as the constituency to be served, not managed. And in a religious institution or trust, it is devotee-first: the discipline of putting the person seeking guidance or service ahead of the institution's own convenience. The Dhai Moorti ethos is, at root, a working template for instilling exactly this discipline — trustworthy, disciplined, always ready, and people-first before mission-first — in any organisation that depends on the people it serves choosing to trust it.



A Hmar Tribal depiction of Dhai Moorti by a soldier after imbibing this force ethos

From Theory to Practice: Winning Peace in Dima Hasao and Jiribam

The Dhai Moorti Force Ethos was never meant to stay on paper. Paired with a new, shared symbol — 'All Tribes, One India' — it became the working discipline behind the 22 Sector campaign across Dima Hasao (Assam) and Jiribam (Manipur) in 2015–2016, aimed at winning the trust of thirteen tribes and six non-tribal communities living side by side.



The Dima Hasao Unity Post — a physical marker of 13 tribes & 6 non-tribes united under 'All Tribes, One India'.



Board of Dhai Moorti Hill People Friendly Ethos displayed at the entrance of HQ of 22 Sector Assam Rifles in Sarkari Bagan Garrison in Haflong, Dima Hasao, Assam, 2015



Flagging off of the 'Brotherhood Ride for Peace and Unity' of the Highlander's Motorcycle Club established by Brigadier Sanjay Vishwasrao. This Club included representatives of all tribes & non-tribes. The Dima Hasao Unity Post is visible behind, January 2016.

While it is comparatively easy to use kinetic tools to destroy a terrorist's means, nested as they are in his weapon, it is far harder to destroy the hope and will nestled deep inside a radicalised or secessionist mind. Because the physical components of victory in this kind of war are short-lived, the principal effort has to focus on ideological victory — convincing the Hill People that India's own 'unity in diversity' is the surer road to peace. That requires every rifleman to become a 'Dhai Moorti Pied Piper,' in Malcolm Gladwell's sense of the word: using the Dhai Moorti rifleman as a messenger to shape and secure the environment and so isolate the terrorists, converting each tactical win — a terrorist neutralised, always by just force — quickly into an ideological, strategic success: radicalism and secessionism neutralised in turn. Only then does strategy genuinely balance the ends sought against the means used to reach them, and the ways those means were applied.

> *"The victorious military is first victorious, and after that goes to battle."*
> **— Sun Tzu**

Adopting the Dhai Moorti Force Ethos turns every rifleman into a genuine 'nationalist Pied Piper' — winning the war of ideas before ever having to fight the terrorists themselves.

THE MESSAGE LANDING

The clearest evidence that an ethos has genuinely taken hold is not a report up the chain of command — it is the community adopting the symbol as its own. At the 2015 Dimasa Youth Festival, the Dimasa Tribe presented the author with a painting by the artist Lokeshwar Bodo: a reinterpretation of the Dhai Moorti recast with a Dimasa mother and daughter in place of the original Burmese refugee family. A community does not voluntarily repaint a military memorial in its own image unless the underlying message — trust, protection, shared identity — has genuinely been received, not merely broadcast.



A Dimasa reinterpretation of the Dhai Moorti, by artist Lokeshwar Bodo of Maibang — presented to the author at the Dimasa Youth Festival, 2015.

RELEVANCE FOR SENIOR RECRUITERS ACROSS SECTORS

Building an ethos that a population, a customer base, a citizenry or a congregation adopts as its own — rather than merely tolerates — is a rare, demonstrable skill, not a slogan. The campaign, this paper on it, and the community's own response to it are offered as evidence of that skill: the ability to translate 'people first' into a working discipline suited to a corporate culture, an FMCG customer promise, a government's citizen charter, or a religious trust's duty of care to its devotees.