

Upgrading the Ubiquitous IFG

Arming the Mountain Strike Corps



vs weight of its class. The LFG Mk.2 has a reported range of 17.2 km which surpasses even its Russian equivalent D-30 122-mm field gun (15.4 km unassisted). Kargil was the debut for our Bofors but behind the shadows was the IFG, providing suppressive fire support to the advancing infantry and remained the most proliferant in this mountain war.

The IFG/LFG brings some major advantages to the Army in the northern and northeastern borders, albeit with lesser firepower than that of a 155 mm against well protected structures like steel reinforced bunkers. Mountainous terrain allows for only light artillery to be transported and the only other gun which can be airlifted by helicopters is the M777 ULH and possibly that designed by the Kalyani Group. The IFG/LFG can be positioned more quickly than the ULH, and because of the latter's limited numbers, the IFG/LFG must be deployed to cover most of the Indo-Chinese borders and those with Pakistan.

The IFG/LFG is of rugged design and coupled with its light weight (lighter than M777) is much more versatile in deployment through various means. The gun can be disassembled and transported on mules or underslung by helicopters (including the Cheetah) or air dropped along with para-gunners.

The most important factor is that the IFG/LFG is already in service with the Indian Army's Regiment of Artillery in quantity, is very affordable with virtually almost no logistical issues remaining.

'Ultima Ratio Regum' used to be inscribed on French cannons on the order of King Louis XIV, which literally translates as "The final Arguments of Kings". Rightly said, for artillery was, remains and will continue to remain, one of the most vital decider on the battlefield.

Since the Bofors imbroglio of the 1980s, no artillery guns were ordered for the Indian Army for over three decades, during which time the artillery arm faced major reductions with our SPG capabilities virtually demolished while towed artillery suffered. But for indigenous production of some pieces, our field artillery capabilities were degraded.

Light amongst the darkness however, and a backbone of our field artillery, has been the 105 mm IFG/LFG or Indian Light Field Gun. Used in quantity by the army during recent conflicts like Kargil, this gun maintains its dominance even today, having been introduced in the 1980s and can well contend being one of the most effective extant in terms of range

Three decades have passed since this gun was first inducted and its replacement, if found, would take around another decade. Over the past 3 decades, the IFG has obviously aged and could use some upgrades. In this article, we'll look at some of these prospects, which would make a future gun complement the IFG rather than replace it.