

No probes, no allegations, no criminal cases

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Mumbai : Senior Inspector Vijay Salaskar never knew what fear was. This, in fact, was a trait he shared with many of the 450-odd officers from the 1983 batch of the Maharashtra Police.

This fourth batch recruited through the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) was young, educated (graduates) and raring to go. "Our principal at the police training academy, Arvind Inamdar, was instrumental in bringing out the boldness in us, and officers like Salaskar, Pradeep Sharma and myself imbibed Inamdar's qualities," said Inspector Arun Borude, a batchmate of Salaskar who is under suspension in the Khwaja Yunus case.

Incidentally, all the well-known encounter specialists of the Mumbai police belonged to the 83 batch. "It was due to officers like Salaskar and others of the 83 batch that Mumbai citizens went to sleep without fear. He was a hardworking person to the core. Once an assignment was handed over to him, he would not sleep till it was accomplished," said Borude.

In his 25 years of service rising from the ranks of Sub-inspector, Salaskar was credited for about 75 encounters of dreaded gangsters. He is responsible for single-handedly annihilating the gangs of Arun Gawli and Amar Naik. Salaskar came into limelight in 1997 when he killed Naik in an encounter.

"He was one of the few officers who was non-controversial and had an ability to gel with seniors and subordinates alike," said batchmate and Senior Inspector Chandrakant Joshi.

In his last exploits, Salaskar killed two members of the Ravi Pujari gang at Kandivali in June 2008 when he was posted at the anti-robbery squad of the crime branch. He is one of the few encounter specialists of the Mumbai Police whose reputation was not stained; there were no probes, no allegations and no criminal cases against him. In his last posting, he was with the Anti-extortion Cell of the Mumbai Police. Originally from Goregaon in Mumbai, he is survived by his parents, wife and two children -- an elder son who has completed his graduation and a daughter who is studying.