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### **General G . S . C. Fonseka RWP RSP VSV USP rcds psc**

CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

General G. S. C. Fonseka RWP RSP VSV USP rcds psc was appointed as the Chief of Defence Staff by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces effective from 15th July 2009.

Lieutenant General G . S . C. Fonseka RWP RSP VSV USP rcds psc was appointed as the Commander of the Army effective from 6th December 2005 and later promoted to the rank of General by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces on 18th May 2009.

Widely admired as one of the greatest battle-hardened warriors of our time, General G. S. C Fonseka has served largely as an illustrious infantry soldier in the northern theatre of war during his exemplary career, particularly at the peak of the LTTE terrorism.

To his credit, when the Jaffna Fort was under siege for a long period, then Colonel G. S. C Fonseka led troops in the famous 'Midnight Express operation', to rescue troops. Incidentally, the incumbent Secretary Defence Lieutenant Colonel Gotabaya Rajapaksa too was with him and together they rescued the lives of hundreds of troops who would always remember them for their leadership and bravery.

His enormous contribution as Deputy General Officer Commanding to conduct operation, 'Riviresa' to evict terrorists and capture Jaffna town in December 1995 continues to remain a living memory because of the dynamic leadership he jointly imparted to his fellow-soldiers, and his meticulously planned tactical knowledge of the warfare, he has possessed. In the same vein, troops commanded by Gen Fonseka offered stiff resistance to LTTE terrorists during operation 'unceasing waves' in 2000, and further consolidated the security network to Jaffna during his four-month stint as Commander, Security Forces Headquarters, Jaffna .

General Fonseka, as a fearless infantryman was at the forefront in operations, 'Balawegaya' and 'Jayasikuru,' that led to rescue the Elephant Pass and capture Mankulam. It was none other than the 6th Battalion of his Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment that was under siege at Elephant Pass in 1991 and reinforcements in a meticulously devised operation successfully repulsed the LTTE attack.

General Fonseka, distinguished himself by his dauntless bravery and excellent command in warfare as well as for his common touch with his troops, sustained injuries during the operation 'Yaldevi' following terrorist attacks. Jaffna, finally became his second home during May 2002-November 2003 after he was again appointed the Commander, Security Forces Headquarters, Jaffna.

His awards and decorations include the Gallantry Medals, Rana Wickrema Padakkama (RWP), Rana Sura Padakkama (RSP), Vishishta Seva Vibhushana (VSV). Utthama Seva Padakkama (USP), Riviresa Campaign Service Medal, Poorna Bhoomi medal, North & East Operations Medal, Desha Puthra Sammanaya and several others.

Over and above the command appointments, he has held a large number of various staff appointments including the Chief of Staff office in the Army, the post he relinquished to take reins as Commander of the Army.

His exciting career opportunities covered almost every sphere of military experience. He served as Deputy Chief of Staff, Sri Lanka Army (01 July 2004 - 09 December 2004), Director General Infantry, Army Headquarters and later on commanded the Sri Lanka Army Volunteer Force between 23 November 2003 and 15 August 2004. In recognition of his fearless leadership, he was twice appointed the Commander, Security Forces Headquarters, Jaffna (21 April- 21 July 2000) and (05 May 2002 to 23 November 2003).

He was also the Commandant, Army Command and Staff College at Battalanda during a very brief period. (05 February-05 May 2002). After his first tenure of office as the Commander, Security Forces Headquarters, Jaffna, he assumed duties as the Commander, Security Forces Headquarters, Wanni on 21 July 2000 and remained there until 12 December, the same year. Despite his busy schedules, Gen Sarath Fonseka simultaneously overlooked the offices of Inspector of Infantry, Quarter Master General, Director General General Staff, Army Headquarters for a short period in 2000. He was the General Officer Commanding in 22 Division, Trincomalee between 10 November 1998 and 15 January 2000.

On being promoted to the two-star rank of Major General on 23 February 1998, Major General Sarath Fonseka became the Colonel of the Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment on 01 February 2002. Major Gen Fonseka served as Officiating General Officer Commanding 55 Division, Mirusuvil, Officiating General Officer Commanding , Task Force 2 in Vavuniya, Deputy General Officer Commanding - Task Force 2 in Vavuniya, Commander, 23 Brigade Polonnaruwa, Deputy General Officer Commanding, 51 Division, Jaffna, Coordinating Officer for Kayts and Mandativu, Commander , 27 Brigade Kilinochchi, Commander, 3 Brigade Batticaloa, Coordinating Officer Election and Security for North and East, Deputy Commander Task Force 1 and Commander Designate Mechanized Brigade, Officiating Commander 21 Brigade, Director Operations after his promotion to the rank of Brigadier on 01 December 1993.

As a Colonel, General Sarath Fonseka commanded the 23 Brigade Polonnaruwa in 1993. Among other appointments, he held included Colonel General Staff Army Headquarters, Centre Commandant, Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment, Deputy Commandant - 5 Brigade Group, Mannar, Brigade Commander Operation Balavegaya and Coordinating Officer for Gampaha.

As a Lieutenant Colonel, he commanded the 1st Battalion, Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment before he assumed the office of General Staff Officer 1 (Operations), HQ 2 Division, Anuradhapura, Officer Commanding/Chief Instructor and Deputy Commandant, Infantry Training Centre, Minneriya.

Enlisted to the Army on 05th February 1970, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and subsequently posted to the 1st Battalion, Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment on 01st June 1971. He has followed the UK-based course offered by Royal College of Defence Studies, Infantry Officers Advanced Course (USA), Staff College Course (Bangladesh), Company Commanders Course (Pakistan), Battalion Support Weapons Course (India), Counter Insurgency Jungle Warfare Course (India), Commando Officers Course (India) and has represented Sri Lanka in a number of international seminars and conferences, including the Pacific Armies Management Seminar (Japan), Conference on fourth International Exhibition of Defence (UK) and another overseas seminar in Geneva. In what was seen a recognition of his military maturity, he was selected to undertake an inspection assignment in Iran in 1992.

General Fonseka, a product of Ambalangoda Dharmasoka College (1958-1965) and Ananda College, Colombo (1966-1969) is a keen sportsman who has excelled in swimming and water polo representing defence services and the country. General Fonseka, married to Mrs Anoma Fonseka has two daughters, Apsara and Aparna.

General Fonseka who through his dedication, commitment and untiring military prowess succeeded in bringing the 30-year old War for Separation to an end was promoted to the rank of General on 18th May 2009, the day, he along with Secretary Defence and other service chiefs officially conveyed His Excellency the President of the final completion of the war.

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