

Tributes and Appreciations to a General

Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa

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The Most Respected Person of the Last Century!

**THE MOST
RESPECTED PERSON
OF THE
LAST CENTURY**



**THE PAIN AND AGONY
OF A GENERAL**

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Awards

received by

Lt. Gen. Denzil Lakshman Kobbekaduwa.



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Trinity College Kandy. Rugby Lion.
Highest award presented to outstanding players
representing the school's first XV Rugby Team.

As an officer in the Sri Lanka Army.

During his 32 year military career he received the Republic of Sri Lanka Armed Services Medal, Army 25th Anniversary Medal, President's Inauguration Medal, Sri Lanka Armed Services Long Service Medal, Vadamarachchi Operation Medal, Purna Bhumi Padakkama and Rana Wickrama Padakkama. He was posthumously promoted to Lieutenant General and awarded the Vishista Seva Vibhushanaya, Rana Sura Padakkama (twice), Uththama Seva Padakkama and Desha Putra Sammanaya.

His widow Mrs. Lali Ratwatte Kobbekaduwa received the Uththama Pooja Pranama Padakkama Medal in 2010.

RWP



RSP



VSV



USP



Desha Putra
Sammanaya



Vadhamarachchi
Operation Medal



Purna Bhumi
Padakkama





The Rana Wickrama Padakkama

(RWP, Combat Gallantry Medal)

(Sinhala: රණ වික්‍රම පදක්කම)

is awarded to Sri Lankan military service personnel as a reward for individual or associated acts of bravery in the face of the enemy and performed voluntarily.



Rana Sura Padakkama

(RSP, Combat Excellence Medal)

(Sinhala: රණ ශූර පදක්කම)

is awarded to service persons of all ranks of the Military of Sri Lanka for individual acts of bravery and otherwise distinguished conduct in the face of the enemy during active deployment.



The Vishista Seva Vibhushanaya

(VSV, Distinguished Service Decoration)

(Sinhala: විශිෂ්ට සේවා විභූෂණය) is awarded to senior officers of the Military of Sri Lanka in recognition of exceptional, distinguished and loyal service provided they count not less than twenty-five years of service and possess an unblemished record of moral and military conduct.



The Uttama Seva Padakkama

(USP, Eminent Service Medal)

(Sinhala: උත්තම සේවා පදක්කම) is presented to all ranks of the regular forces of the Sri Lankan military for valuable service and devotion to duty marked by exceptional ability, merit and exemplary conduct provided they count not less than 15 years continuous and uninterrupted service and possess an unblemished record of moral and military conduct.



The Desha Putra Sammanaya

(Sinhala: දේශ පුත්‍ර සම්මානය)

Son of the Nation Award is a military decoration awarded to service persons of the Military of Sri Lanka, who were wounded in action, equivalent to the United States Purple Heart.



The Vadamarachchi Operation Medal

(Sinhala: වඩමාරච්චි මෙහෙයුම් පදක්කම) was a campaign medal presented to all ranks of the regular and volunteer forces of the Military of Sri Lanka that served in the Vadamarachchi Operation (26 May 1987 to June 1987), the last major campaign carried out by the Sri Lankan military as part of Eelam War I before the arrival of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka. The award was also awarded to civilians that aided in the operation.



The Purna Bhumi Padakkama

(Sinhala: පූර්ණ භූමි පදක්කම)

was a military decoration awarded by the Military of Sri Lanka (regular and volunteer) and Sri Lanka Police to all ranks of its forces in recognition of service in various districts that were regarded as theaters of the Sri Lankan Civil War.



The Uththama Pooja Pranama Padakkama

(Medal of Honour for Supreme Sacrifice)

(Sinhala: උත්තම පූජා ප්‍රණාම පදක්කම) is the medal presented to the next of kin of all service persons of the military and police of Sri Lanka in recognition of a service person's death in the line of duty. It is awarded to the families of personnel confirmed killed in action or missing in action.



Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa
Planning out a strategy
while listening to the communication
set in the battlefield



ACHIEVEMENTS

His achievements at his Alma Mater, Trinity College Kandy.

- ◆ Passed the University Entrance exam & qualified to gain admission to the University of Peradeniya. However he opted for a career with the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Army.
- ◆ Senior Prefect. Trinity College Kandy 1960.
- ◆ Prefect. Lemuel House. 1959/60.
- ◆ Captain T.C.K. 1st XV Rugby Team 1959. Awarded the Rugby Lion.
- ◆ Vice-Captain T.C.K. 1st XI Hockey Team 1959. Awarded the Hockey Colours.
- ◆ Member of the T.C.K. 1st XI Cricket Team 1960.

His achievements as a Sportsman / Administrator at National level.

- ◆ Represented Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Rugby Football Union XV.
- ◆ Secretary Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union.
- ◆ Represented S.L. Army Sports Club XV & Kandy Sports Club XV. Clifford Cup Tournament.
- ◆ Captained the Sri Lanka Army & Kandy Sports Club Rugby Teams.
- ◆ Coached the Trinity College Rugby Teams 1967/1968/1969/1970.
- ◆ Coached the Sri Lanka Army team.
- ◆ President of the Referees Society Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union.
- ◆ He was an international Rugby referee and Refereed in Asian Tournaments.
- ◆ He was the first Trinitian to referee a Bradby Shield game, Royal vs Trinity.
- ◆ Member of the governing body of Duncan White Foundation.

DEDICATION

This note book of Tributes & Appreciations to a General is dedicated.

To the most respected person of the last century-Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa. He was a great battle commander who fought a war with his fellow officers and men of the Tri Services of Sri Lanka. The strategies adopted by him with commitment and courage kept a silver line for the future leaders of the Security Forces to ensure victory over the brutal L.T.T.E. terrorists.

To the brave Men and Women soldiers of the Sri Lankan Tri forces, Members of the Sri Lankan Police & the Civil Defence Force who extended great support to Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa & sacrifices, to protect the nation and its citizens from terrorism.

To the Parents of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Late Mr. & Mrs. L.B. Kobbekaduwa for permitting their son to join the S.L. Army and serve the nation to eradicate terrorism.

To the Father in law & Mother in law of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Late Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Ratwatte for the support and guidance provided by them for the General to perform as a true Professional Soldier in the Sri Lanka Army.

To Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa's wife Mrs. Lali Ratwatte Kobbekaduwa, a great lady who was always behind this General and supported all his activities in the war front, Sports playing fields, Border Village projects, Armed Services welfare projects, Armed services Hospital projects while single handedly bringing up their three children Roshani, Shanilka and Dilshan.

Finally may I take this opportunity to mention to the members of the family of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, "May all of them be blessed with courage to move on with their lives despite the irreparable loss and raise their heads with pride for the bravery of our hero who made a supreme sacrifice in defending the Unity, Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty of our Motherland". Also please keep in mind that all you members of the Kobbekaduwa family are decedents of the Famous Meegastenne Adigar who went to war with the invading Dutch forces and won the battle to safeguard the Kandyan Kingdom.

FOREWARD

A message from the children of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa

Firstly special thanks to you Sunil Maama, Shirani Nanda, Gayan and Rashika, Maneesha and Maduranga, for all the work put in to getting this book of tributes together. It is much appreciated and will never be forgotten.

Our heartfelt thanks as well to everyone who took the time to send in tributes and share their thoughts, memories and moments with us.

So we were asked to write a tribute to Appuchchi. There's so much to say yet so few words to say it with. It's very difficult to put it in to words

Appuchchi was and always will be a huge part of us and who we are today. He was the best father a child could have. His love for us was unending. He was everything to us. Our world fell apart when we lost him. It was like walking in to a dark tunnel. But this one had no light at the end of it.

As we said it's impossible to put it in to words. So maybe we 'll share a few memories instead.... Like the time Roshani was due to go for her first dance. Mind you she was 18 and going with two close cousins to the tea trader's dance. He was all worked up about it and finally agreed that she could go but she had to be home at 22:00hrs. The dance was due to start at 21:30hrs!!!!

One day he called in the morning. He tried his best to call every single day. Well that specific day was Shanilka's bday and she happened to answer the phone. It was a very normal how was school type of conversation. Then the phone was handed over to ammi. A little while later she was called back to

the phone and he's like... (in an indignant voice) why did you give the phone to ammi before I could wish you? Whats wrong with you!! Never admitting that he had forgotten!!

Then let's talk about his projects. Like one time he calls ammi and says he promised to do some work at the deaf and blind school in Anuradhapura and can he send her a till or two to fill to collect money for it? She said ok. Next morning! an army truck arrives and the whole truck bed is full!! Like really full of these fat tins (like those old Anchor tins) made in to tills. Of course ammi filled them all with donations with the help of her family and friends. But appuchchi did get an earful in the process!! It wasn't the first or last project either. The endless supply of toffee packs for the soldiers was the biggest. Star, Dot and Milady toffees were all over our house all the time and we were not allowed to touch a single one!!

He always tried to make the time for us and ammi always made sure we went to where he was based every weekend so we could see him. He used to love to sing nursery rhymes with malli which he recorded on a little voice recorder and then play it back and sing it all over again so malli could learn it better.

Once, while in Anuradhapura appuchchi let us go on a boat ride on Nachchaduwa Tank. Which was super fun until we capsized in the muddy waters? Due to someone swinging their leg out (knowing the three of us we are sure everyone can guess 'whodunnit!') Anyway, appuchchi's ankle was badly swollen due to a scorpion bite but it didnt stop him from jumping in to the tank to come and save us. Ammi's first thought of course was that the scorpion venom had gone to his brain and he'd gone mad when she saw him throw his shirt off and do a hobbling run, before jumping in to the muddy waters!

He used to love to come to Colombo and have a glass of whiskey or brandy and relax. His drinking partner?!! - our grandmother 'punchi' who loved to have a sherry or brandy with him and chat.

Once he got in to a lot of trouble! He was back home for 2 nights and promised to take ammi to choose a saree for a wedding. So ammi gets all her chores done super fast (we were possibly 3 of the most messy children on earth) and gets ready to go out. Meanwhile, appuchchi had decided he should help Roshani to clean out and set up the little pond he built outside, which took till lunch time. Boy was ammi mad! He got the silent treatment and he couldn't figure out what he had done. But it didn't stop him trying to butter her up all through lunch and in the evening it was hilarious!

So many memories too many to share and too painful to recall since we won't have any more of them with him... It's sad that our children, Nishantha and Shawn never got the chance to meet him.

Having said all that - Appuchchi would not have been able to do the things he did without Ammi. She was the wind beneath his wings! She had to always be a mother and a stand in father. Her life was not easy! With 3 kids struggling with losing their father, the grief of losing her partner in crime, looking after all of us, the death threats and harassment because she continued with the commission of inquiries to establish the truth and so much more...but she just took it all in her stride and still does. We didn't just have an amazing father we also have an amazing mother. Similar to the Russian Matryoska dolls she has many layers and is an amazing role model to us. So Thank you Ammi for putting up with us.

♥ Roshani, Shanilka and Dilshan

A message from the Sons in Law of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa

What are legends made of?

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples." **Mother Theresa.** My brother in law (Nishantha) and I are very unfortunate not to have met our father in law, Uncle Denzil, better known as the People's General.

Taking the essences out of Mother Teresa's quote, it is the many ripples in the water or should I say the many lives that he has made such an impact on and the lasting impressions during his life that has helped us to get to know him as a person.

Although we don't have personal events/experiences to share, we truly get an essence or a glimpse of what it would have been to have him around, through the work that Aunty Lali does up to date, such as projects through the Kobbekaduwa trust which was set up in uncle's name to help soldiers, their families and the scholarship programs for differently abled soldiers scarred for life with war injuries/trauma, or the strength she had to show and continues to show in making sure her three children are okay, even with the loss of their hero.

It's amazing that to date, even with the war being over for so many years a number of our soldiers keep writing to her, seeking her help, unfortunately even though the war has ended and many people have moved on, there are so many soldiers and their families still needing help to move forward with their lives. Aunty Lali always seems to find a way in her own little way to help these soldiers the best way she can, but I must say it's becoming more challenging day by day as funds and donations have all but seem to have faded away. Yet she continues to strive to help these

heroes to keep their spirits up and showing them respect regardless of their rank.

There is a saying that you don't only marry the girl, you marry the entire family, in this case what an awesome outcome for us both. The Kob-bekaduwa ladies are as strong hearted as they get, yes both of us have our handful managing these three dynamic ladies, but luckily we are not outnumbered and Dilshan (Mallie) balances things out.

We see so much of him, in Roshani, Shanilka & Dilshan, the biggest compliment to a father is if your children grow up with the right ethics, integrity and attitude and very simply become a good human being who truly cares about people and knows the simple right and wrong about the choices they make.

There isn't a single day, we don't feel their loss, they may not speak about it, but the pain and the loss they feel to date can be seen in their eyes. I recall Dilshan walking both of his sisters down the aisle on their wedding day, stepping in for his appuchchi, how much uncle would have given to have done that himself. What a bittersweet moment.

However, it would be reasonable to assume that our path to obtain his daughters hands in marriage may have not been an easy one if we had to seek his permission first, to date I recall the many charity projects we had to execute and the many vesak Kuddus we had to make to win Aunty's permission. We can only imagine what uncle would have put us through to win his trust and respect. However, it would have definitely been worth it as we would have met him in person.

The greatest honor we can bestow on him and his legendary character is to live by some of his core values, care about people who were less fortu-

nate regardless of their religion, or race, work hard on something you believe in and give it your all.

These are some of the values we hope to instill in his grandchildren; Kimaya, Kevann, Kai & Kinani, what wouldn't he have given up to have met them. Auntie keeps reminding us that we would have never been allowed to correct them, if he was around...Roshani and Shani speak of the times; he used to come home for quick visits in between operations, the very rare occasions he was in Colombo and how they would speak for long hours.

This is something our kids will unfortunately never experience and will miss dearly. They speak of big aththa as if they have met him and it's no surprise that both grandsons (Kevaan & Kai) love playing rugby, whilst the eldest granddaughter (Kimaya) loves to swim, Kinani is the smallest of them all and she often talks about the many make believe activities she does with Big Aththa.

Uncle Sunil, a very big thank you for taking the time to compile this book in Uncle Denzil's memory, both Nishantha and I would probably be the only two people in this book who have not met him in person, but in many ways, we also feel we have. We truly appreciate all the hard work, the amount of thought and effort you have put in to it.

I hope someday that we will be able to measure up to this great man, a true legend and man that we both look up to, and with the hope that we will meet him somewhere in heaven and share a glass of whisky with him, on the rocks of course!

May his soul rest in peace!

Nishantha & Shawn.

A message

from the Grand Children of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobekaduwa

It's a shame we couldn't meet Big Aththa! We are very sad! But we get to hear lots of awesome stories about him and we love to hear them!! We all wish he was here!

Aththa tells us that if he was here he would not have let our parents scold us that would have been awesome!!!!

We LOVE you Big Aththa. We will meet you one day up in the stars. Wait for us... Lots and lots of love and hugs and kisses,

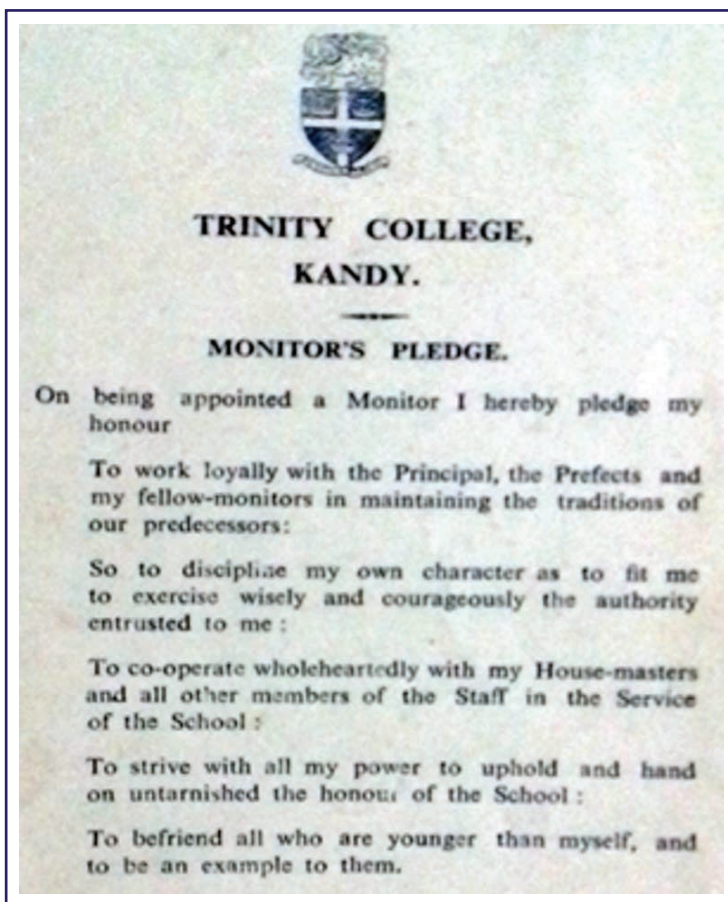
♥ Kimi, Kevi, Kai and Kinani



Grandchildren of General Denzil Kobbekaduwa



The Trinity College Crest of Alma Mater



The first Monitors pledge taken by Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa as a senior student when he was admitted to the Trinity College Kandy school officers' guild.

Objectives

of this Initiative & Appreciation to all those who supported the project.

As a person who had first-hand information as to how Gen. Denzil Lakshman Kobbekaduwa moved around within the Sri Lankan society & in other countries in this so called planet earth and written many articles regarding his contribution to all Sri Lankans as a born Leader and a Statesman, there were many request to me from his followers to write his biography and publish it. However it was felt that more information should be gathered from the outside world by giving an opportunity to personnel who were known to him to make a comment of this great personality. Also for the younger generation to express their views as to how he achieved great leadership skills and commanded the respect of all. However I am enclosing notes, tributes, testimonies written about the most respected person of the last century Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa for the people to decide what type of a leader / statesman he was.

I have included a large amount of tributes sent during the past six weeks by Sri Lankans living in our motherland & overseas to Lt. General Denzil Lakshman Kobbekaduwa. This will help all readers of this note book - Tributes & Appreciations to a General to determine and form their own opinion about this great personality and what type of leadership style he adopted. Generally the leadership styles adopted by most of the leaders are Dictatorial, Autocratic, Democratic & Laissez - Faire (Free Rein) and they work on one style. However Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a unique person with skills to adopt different leadership styles to suit the occasion. He was a great strategist, quick to make decisions, stood by his colleagues & was always flexible. This resulted him commanding the respect of all. That's why he was known as the People's General.

The Dictatorial Leader. - Gets work done through fear. He tells his human resource team exactly what to do and how to do it. Leaves little room for questions. Achieve results through threat of penalties or punishment.

The Autocratic Leader. - Makes all decisions all by himself and force his team to depend upon him exclusively. He also tells them what to do and how to do it, but normally does not use fear as a means of achieving results.

The Democratic Leader. - This leader makes full use of the talents & the abilities of his team by getting them to participate in decision making and problem solving. He uses requests and suggestions rather than direct orders to get things done. As far as possible allow his team to have control over their work.

The Laissez - Faire (or Free Rein) Leader. - This type of leader allow his team to establish its own goals and decisions, seldom gives orders but instead contacts the team to provide them with information necessary to execute their task.

To me the leadership style General Denzil Kobbekaduwa adopted was the Democratic style. However, when the situation demanded to change the style of leadership he did so but after achieving the desired result he quickly changed back to the more democratic style of leadership. This flexibility was his success story.

Therefore, I feel that contents in this note book – Tributes & Appreciations to a General will be of great value for the leadership skills development of future leaders of Sri Lanka and for them to decide on what leadership style they should follow to build a Sri Lankan nation for the generations to follow.

I do not intend publishing this note book – Tributes and Appreciations to a General and make it available in book shops. A limited edition of this note book Tributes and Appreciations to a General will be shared with the Kobbekaduwa family, Trinity College Library, S.L. Defence Establishment Libraries & contributors of tributes and use it as a read / reference book for future leaders of Sri Lanka. Indeed they can use this book for their case studies to develop their leadership skills and the leadership style to adopt.

To Dear Friends, Relations, Ex Armed Service Personnel, Present Armed Service Personnel, Members of the Trinity College Old Boys Associations & Members of Sri Lanka Rugby.

May I take this opportunity to say a big Thank You to all who found the time to contribute by sending tributes even after 26 years of his demise. Also your contributions to this project will help future leaders of Sri Lanka to develop their leadership skills and in building a better nation for our Future Generations.

Finally I have to offer a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Lali Kobbekaduwa & the children Roshani, Shanilka & Dilshan for the support given to me to embark on this project.



Sunil Keppetipola.
15th September 2018.

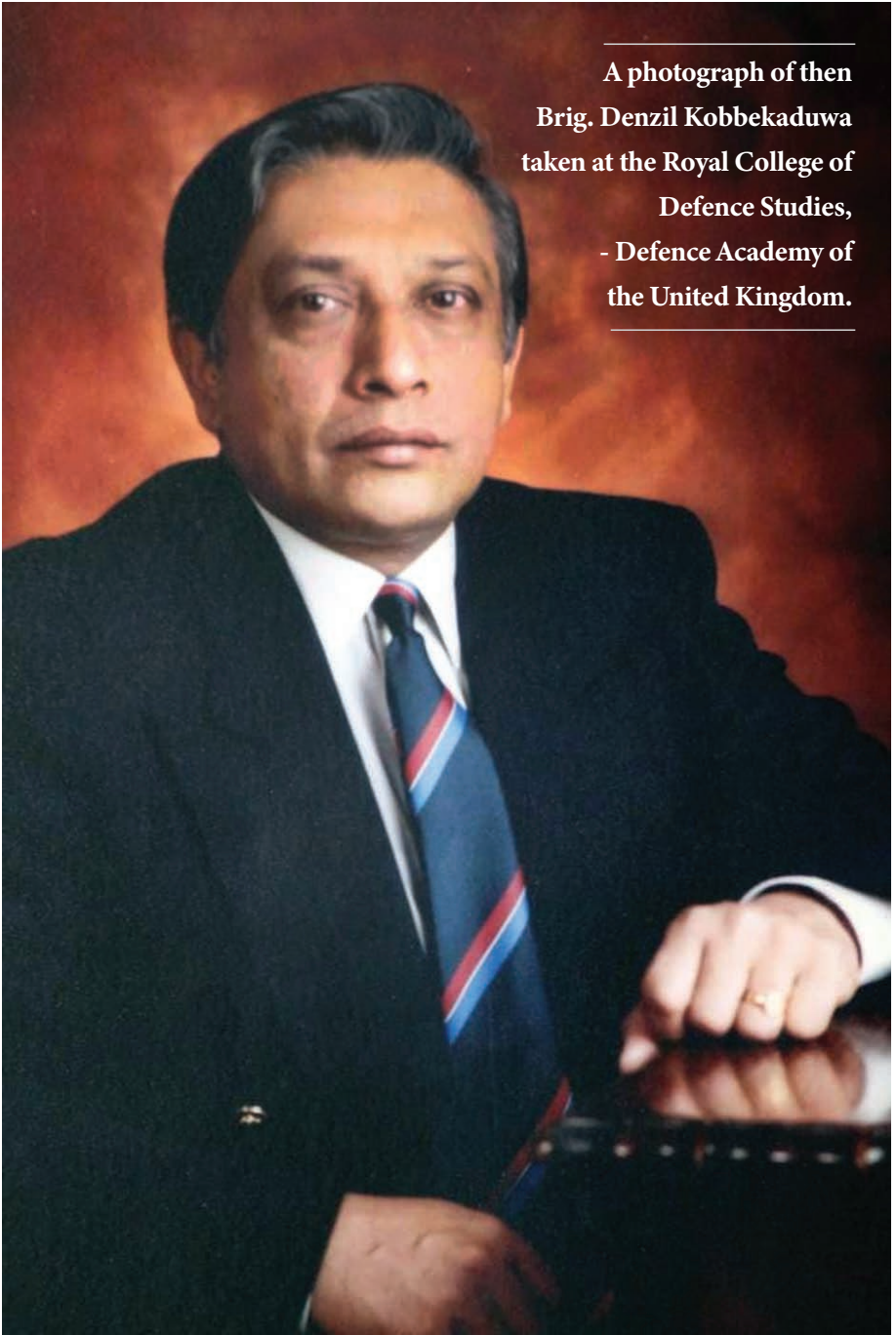


The Crest of the Armoured Corps



**A photograph of then
Lt. Col. of his regiment,
The Armoured Corps**

A photograph of then
Brig. Denzil Kobbekaduwa
taken at the Royal College of
Defence Studies,
- Defence Academy of
the United Kingdom.





ලුතිහන් ජෙනරාල් **ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව** **මැතිදුන්**

නිස්වසරක් වූ කෲර ත්‍රස්තවාදයේ අතීතය විමසා බැලීමේ දී වර්තමානයේ මුද්‍රා මහත් ජාතියම ලබන්නා වූ නිදහස තුළ අප කාහටත් කිසිසේත් අමතක කළ නොහැකි වූ විරෝධාර වර්ත රාශියකි. එයින් මේජර් ජනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව නාමය රණබිම තුළ මෙන්ම මුලුමහත් ජනහඳවත් තුළ ද අමරණීයව ලියවී ඇත. ඒ සඳහා වූ එතුමාගෙන් ජාතියට වූ උදාර මෙහෙයන් රාශියකි. ඒ සියල්ල සඳහන් කිරීමට නොහැකි වුව ද අපගේ මතකයේ ඇති අතීතාවර්ජන කිහිපයක් මෙහි දී සඳහන් කරමි.

කොබ්බෑකඩුව මුතිදුන් උපත ලද්දේ 1940 වර්ෂයේ ඇසළ මාසයේදී ය. පිළිමතලාව දෙල්දෙණිය වලව්වේ ලොකුබණ්ඩාර කොබ්බෑකඩුව මෙතුමාගේ පියා වූ අතර ගුන්නපාන අමුණුගම වළව්වේ ආයෝජනා රත්වත්තේ මැතිණිය මවය. එවකට දළදා මාලිගාවේ දියවඩන නිළමේ ලෙස කටයුතු කරන ලද්දේ මෙතුමාගේ මුත්තනුවන් වූ රත්වත්තේ මැතිතුමාය. මහනුවර හිල්වුඩ් විද්‍යාලයෙන් මූලික අධ්‍යාපනය ලැබූ මෙතුමා පසුව මහනුවර ත්‍රිත්ව විද්‍යාලයට ඇතුළත් විය. අධ්‍යාපනයට මෙන්ම බාහිර ක්‍රියාකාරකම් වලට ද උනන්දුවක් දැක් වූ මෙතුමා පාසලේ ප්‍රධාන ශිෂ්‍ය නායකයා ලෙස ද කටයුතු කළ අතර පාසලේ සෑම අංශයකින්ම කැපී පෙනෙන ශිෂ්‍යයෙකු විය. පාසැල් ජීවිතයෙන් අනතුරුව වැවිලි කරුවෙකු වීම සඳහා දැඩි කැමැත්තක් දැක්වූ නමුත් හදිසි තීරණයකට අනුව මෙතුමා 1960 මැයි මස 25 දින යුධ හමුදාවට එක්විය. ඒ තම රටේ භෞමික අඛණ්ඩතාවය ආරක්ෂා කිරීම සඳහා ය.

කැඩෙට් නිළධාරියෙකු ලෙස තම රාජකාරී ආරම්භ කළ කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතා දියතලාව යුදහමුදා කඳවුරෙන් පුහුණුව ලබා පසුව එක්සත් රාජධානියේ සැන්ඩ්‍රිස්හි රාජකීය හමුදා විද්‍යා පීඨයෙන් පුහුණුව ලැබීමට වරම් හිමි කරගන්නා ලදී. අනතුරුව 1962 වර්ෂයේ සිට දෙවන ලුතිනන් වරයෙක් ලෙස කටයුතු කළේය. ඉන් අනතුරුව ඉතා කෙටි කලකදී යළිත් එක්සත් රාජධානියේ බෝවිංටන් හමුදා පාසලට ඇතුළත්

වූ මෙතුමා එහි දී යුද හමුදාවේ අවශ්‍යතාවයක් වූ රෙජිමේන්තු සංඥා නිලධාරී පාඨමාලාව හැදෑරූ අතර එහිදී ම සන්නද්ධ රථ රියදුරු පාඨමාලාව ද හදාරා ඇත. 1964 වර්ෂයේ දී නැවත ලංකාවට පැමිණෙන මෙතුමා ලුතිනන් ධුරයට උසස් විය.

මෙම කාලයේදී රටේ දේශපාලන පසුබිම තුළ කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන්ට නොයෙකුත් පීඩන එල්ල වන්නට විය. එයින් අපගේ මතකයේ ඇති ප්‍රධානම සිදුවීම නම් එවකට ආණ්ඩුව කරවූ ඩඩ්ලි සේනානායක ප්‍රමුඛ පිරිස මෙතුමන් වහාම ක්‍රියාත්මක වන පරිදි නිවාඩු යැවීමයි. එවකට යුධ හමුදාපති වරයා ලෙස කටයුතු කළ රිචඩ් උඩුගම මහතා ඇතුළු පිරිසට ආණ්ඩුව පෙරලා දමා බලය අල්ලා ගැනීමට කුමන්ත්‍රණය කිරීමේ චෝදනාවට නඩු පැවරුණු අතර යුධ හමුදාපති වරයා සමග සමීප ඇසුරක් පැවැත් වූ ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතාට ද මෙයින් පසුව නොයෙකුත් දේශපාලන තාඩන පීඩන එල්ල විය. නමුත් 1970 දී නැවත බලයට පත් වූ රජයේ ආරක්‍ෂක ඇමති වූ ලක්ෂ්මන් ජයකොඩි මහතා කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන් අතුළු පිරිසට ලැබිය යුතු සියලු වැටුප් හා අදාළ නිළතල ද සමග නැවත සේවයේ පිහිට විය. මෙම වර්ෂයේම කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන් විවාහ දිවියට ඇතුළත් වූ අතර ඔහුගේ අතින් නගනු ලැබුවේ ලලි රත්වත්තේ මැතිණියයි.

එක්සත් රාජධානියේ යුද හමුදා මාණ්ඩලික විද්‍යාලීය පාඨමාලාව හා රෝයල් කොලේජ් ඔෆ් ඩිපෙන්ස් ස්ටඩීස් පාඨ මාලාව හැදෑරූ කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතා කල මෙහෙයුම් අතර වඩමාරවිච් සටන සුවිශේෂී වේ. වඩමාරවිච් සටන සිදුවූයේ ලලිත් ඇතුළත්මුදලි මහතා ආරක්‍ෂක ඇමති ධුරය පත්ව සිටියදීය. දහදහසක බල ඇණිය හතළිස් හතර දහසක් (44,000) දක්වා වැඩිකල ඇතුළත්මුදලි මහතා වඩමාරවිච් සටන ජයග්‍රහණය කරන තුරු සෙබලුන් දිරිගන්වමින් සටන් පෙරමුනට ශක්තිය ලබා දුන්නේය. ඇතුළත්මුදලිගේ කැපවීමත් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතාගේ නුවණත් නිසා කොටි නායක ප්‍රහාකරන් අත් අඩංගුවට ගැනීමට ඉතා ආසන්නව තිබුණි. නමුත් ඉංදියාව කල මැදිහත්වීම නිසා මේ සියල්ල ව්‍යාර්ථ විය.

වන්නි වික්‍රම මෙහෙයුම් පෙළ, බලවේග මෙහෙයුම් පෙළ, අකුණුපහර, වන්ඩ මාරුතය ආදී වූ ක්‍රියාත්මකයන් සඳහා නායකත්වය දුන් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන් 1992 අගෝස්තු 08 වන දින යාපනය අර්ධද්වීපය අත්පත් කරගැනීම සඳහා ආයතල් කවුන්ට් මෙහෙයුම සඳහා සාකච්ඡා පැවැත්වීමට කරෙයිනගර් සිට කයිරිස් තොටුපොලට පැමිණියේය. එයින් අරාලිය දක්වා ජීප් රථයකින් යන අතරතුර මාරක බෝම්බයකට අසුවී මේජර් ජෙනරාල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතා ඇතුළු පිරිස දූයෙන් සමුගන්නේ කිසිවෙක් කිසිවිටෙක නොසිතූ නොපැතු ආකාරයෙනි. එයින් ජාතියට වූ පාඩුව මෙපමණයැයි පැවසීමට නොහැකිය. එතුමාගේ වියෝව එදා සිදු නොවීනම් පැවති යුද්ධය හමාර වී දූනට බොහෝ කලක්ය. එය අවිවාදයෙන් සෑම දෙනාම පිළිගන්නා කරුණකි.

කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතා යුද්ධයේ අඳුරු සෙවනැලි සාමාන්‍ය ජනතාවගේ සිතට වැටුනු කල ඒ සඳහා නිසි පියවර රාශියක් ගැනීමට කටයුතු කළේය. අසරණ ජනතාව සඳහා ඔහුගේ උපකාර නිරන්තරයෙන් හිමිවිය. සිත්තසිටිකුලම් මුස්ලිම් ජනතාවට ජීවත්වීමට නොහැකිව සිටි අවස්ථාවේ ලුණු වගාව ආරම්භ කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය සියලු පහසුකම් ලබා දුන්නේ කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන්නේ අතින්ය. ආර්ථික අතින් මෙන්ම සෞඛ්‍ය අතින්ද යුද්ධය නිසා අසරණ වූ ජනතාවට මෙතුමන් අතින් සිදුවූ මෙහෙවර අතිමහත්ය. ඔහු ත්‍රස්තවාදය සමඟ යුද්ධ කල නමුදු දෙමළ ජනතාවට කිසි විටෙක වෙර කළේ නැත. අසරණ දෙමළ ජනතාවගේ පිහිටට නිරන්තරයෙන් සිටියේ ජෙනරාල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන්නේය.

වඩාගැටව් පදක්කම, පූර්ණ භූමි පදක්කම, සන්නද්ධ සේවා දීර්ඝ සේවා පදක්කම ආදී පදක්කම් රාශියකින් තම යුද හමුදා ජීවිතය තුල පිදුම් ලැබීමට මෙතුමා සමත් වී ඇත.

විශේෂයෙන් උතුරු නැගෙනහිර විහාරස්ථාන මූලිකව මෙතුමන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කල සමාජ සේවාවන් ඉතා විශාලය. අසරණ ජනතාවගේ දුක හඳුනා ගන්නා වූ නායකයෙකු ලෙස වර්ථමානයේද එම ප්‍රදේශයන් හි ජනතාවගේ හදවත් තුල කොබ්බෑකඩුව නාමය අමරණීයව පවතී. අප දන්නා පරිදි වව්නියාව, තත්තිරිමලේ ආදී විහාරස්ථානයන් සමඟ මෙතුමන්ගේ ඉතා සමීප ඇසුරක් පැවැතිනි සෑම අවස්ථාවක මෙම විහාරස්ථානයන් වෙත කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන් පැමිණෙන්නේ එම විහාරස්ථානවල නායක ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේලාගේ සුවදුක් බැලීමට හා සාකච්ඡා කිරීමටය. හිටපු තත්තිරිමලේ නායක හාමුදුරුවෝ වන කුඩා කෝන්ගස්කඩ විමලඥාණ හාමුදුරුවෝ සමඟ දැඩි සමීප බවක් මෙතුමන් තුල පැවතිනි. විජයබාහු භාර අරමුදල නමින් අරමුදලක් නායක හාමුදුරුවන් සමඟ එක්වී ආරම්භකල මෙතුමා ඒ තුළින් ප්‍රදේශයේ මායිම් ගම්මාන වල ජනතාවට සනීපාරක්‍ෂාව, යටිතල පහසුකම් හා මූලික මිනිස් අයිතිවාසිකම් නොපිරිහෙලා ඉටු කළේය. මැදවව්විය, විලව්විය, වැලිවඹය, කැබිනිගොල්ලුව, මන්නාරම ආදී ප්‍රදේශවල ජීවත් වූ ජනතාවට මෙමඟින් මහත් වූ සේවයක් ඉටුවිය.

රටේ භෞමික අඛණ්ඩතාවය වෙනුවෙන්, මුළු මහත් ජාතිය වෙනුවෙන් අති මහත් උදාර සේවයක් සිදුකල ලුතිනන් ජෙනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිදුන්ට උතුම් වූ නිර්වාන සම්පත්තිය ලැබේවායි ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමි.

අනුරාධපුර ඓතිහාසික ඉසුරුමුණි
රජමහා විහාරාධිපති
මල්වතු පාර්ශවයේ නුවර ගම් පළාතේ
ප්‍රධාන අධිකරණ සංඝනායක
මහව ශ්‍රී සංඝරත්න සුමංගල නායක ස්ථවිර



කොබ්බෑකඩුව ශ්‍රීමතාහන්ගේ මතකයෙන් බිඳක්

රට දූය සාමය වෙනුවෙන් ජීවිතය පූජා කළ වීරවරයින්, යුග පුරුෂයින් ඇත අතීතයෙන්, මෑත යුගයෙන් සිටින. ඔවුන්ගේ ලෙයින්, දහඩියෙන්, කඳුලෙන් මේ මාතෘ භූමිය තෙත්ව ඇත. ගජබා, විජයබා, දුටුගැමුණු, වළගම්බා, ඇහැලේපොළ, කැප්පැටිපොළ, මායාදුන්නේ වීදිය බණ්ඩාර ආදී යුගපුරුෂයින් ශ්‍රී නාමයන්ගෙන් අපේ ඉතිහාසය වර්ණවත් වී ඇත.

මේ පරපුරේ ජාතියේ පිනට පහළ වූ යුග පුරුෂයෙකි ලුතිනන් ජෙනරාල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව සෙන්පතියාණෝ. කන්ද උඩරට වැදගත් පවුලක උපත ලද මෙතුමා ශේෂ්ඨ, මානුෂික ගුණ දහමින් පිරිපුන් පුද්ගලයෙක් විය. වාමනාවන්ත ගුරු දෙගුරුන්ගේ ලද අභාෂය ඊට හේතු විය. වෘත්තීය වශයෙන් මෙතුමා ඇලුම් කලේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා යුද්ධ හමුදාවටයි. එහි ප්‍රතිඵලයක් වශයෙන් මෙතුමා 1960 මැයි 29 දින කැඩෙට් නිළධාරියෙකු වශයෙන් හමුදාවට බැඳුනි. එතැන් සිට පියවරෙන් පියවර උසස් වීම් ලැබ දෙස් විදෙස් කීර්තිනාමයන් ගොඩනගා ගන්නා ලදී. මෙහිදී දැක්වූ කුසලතා පදනම් කරගෙන ශ්‍රී ලංකා යුද්ධ හමුදාවෙන් හා රාජ්‍ය ප්‍රධානීන්ගෙන් ද ලැබිය යුතු පදවි පදක්කම්, සහතික සම්මාන රාශියක් උරුම කරගත් රණශූරයෙකි.

ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිතුමා රටේ ගිහි පැවදි අය අතරින් ත්‍රිවිධ හමුදාව තුළත් වැඩියෙන් කතා බහට ලක්වන්නේ 1987 වර්ෂයේදී පමණය. එයට මූලික හේතුව වූයේ ඒකීය රාජ්‍යයක් තුළ මෙතුමන් කල් සහෝදරත්වයෙන් ජීවත් වූ ද්‍රවිඩ ජනතාව තුළ ජාති හේදය අවුළුවා නිජ භූමි සංකල්පයක් මතුකර උතුරු නැගෙනහිර ජනතාව යුද්ධ මානුෂිකත්වයට ඇද දූමු මිලේජ්ව මිනීමරු ප්‍රභාකරන් නැමති කොටි ත්‍රස්තවාදියාගේ තිරිසන් ක්‍රියාවලිය මැඩලීමට අවංක නිර්භීත සුදුස්සා ලෙස පත්කල දා පටන්ය.

අලිමංකඩ, වන්නි පෙදෙස, වඩමාරච්චි, යාපනය, කොටුව, කිරාත්, මන්නාරම, මුලතිව් කොටි ත්‍රස්තවාදයෙන් මුදාගැනීමත් සමඟ මේ ශ්‍රී නාමය ජනී ජනයාගේ මුවග නිති රැඳෙන මාතෘකාවක් බවට පත්විය.

මෙතුමා ගැමි පරිසරය තුළත්, බෞද්ධ පරිසරය තුළත්, සාමාන්‍ය ජනතාව අතර හැදුණු වැඩුණ කෙනෙකි. මේ නිසා මෙතුමා සසුනේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිගරුක හොඳම හොඳ සද්ධාවන්ත බෞද්ධයකි. යුද්ධයේදී විනාශ වන්නේ දේපල මෙන් මිනිස් ජීවිතයි. මේ න්‍යාය මෙතුමා හොඳින් දැනගෙන සිටියහ. එබැවින් සාමාන්‍ය ජනයා ආරක්‍ෂා කරගනිමින් තම දරුවන් මෙන් සොල්දාදුවන් ආරක්‍ෂා කරගනිමින් මේ යුධ මෙහෙයුම් කල යුතුය යන මේ සාධාරණ සිතුවිල්ලට තුරුණුවන්ගේ හා ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන් වහන්සේගේ ආශීර්වාදයත්, පිහිටක් ලැබෙන බව මෙතුමා හොඳින් දැනගෙන සිටියහ.

සැළසුම් කර යුධ මෙහෙයුම් ආරම්භ කිරීමට ප්‍රථමයෙන් ආශීර්වාද ලබාගැනීම සඳහා ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධී ස්ථානයට පැමිණේ.

සම්ප්‍රදානුකූලව පළමුව පැමිණෙන්නේ උඩමළුවේ පන්සලටය. ඒ අටමස්ථානාධිපති නාහිමිපාණන්වහන්සේ බැහැදක අවසර ලබාගැනීමටයි. එවකට අටමස්ථානාධිපතිව වැඩ සිටියේ පල්ලේගම ශ්‍රේණාරතන අපේ නායක හිමිපානන් වහන්සේය. දහැත් වට්ටියක් පිරිනමා ලසඟ පිහිටුවා වැද පොඩි ආසනයක වාඩි වී නාහිමිපාණන් වහන්සේගේ සුවදුක් විමසා දෙදෙනා උතුරේ පවතින නොසන්සුන්තාවය පිළිබඳ සාකච්ඡා කරයි.

අපද ගරු සරුව මඳක් ඇතින් සිට මේ කතා බහට ඕනෑකමින් සවන්දීමෙන් සිටින්නෙමු. මෙහිදී මා මෙතුමාගේ සුවිශේෂත්වයක් දකිමි. එනම්, ඇතැම් පුද්ගලයින් මෙන් උඩමළුවට යාමට ඉල්ලා කරදර නොකිරීමයි. නමුත් නාහිමිපාණන්වහන්සේ දෙවරක් නොසිතා මෙතුමාට ඒ දුර්ලභ අවස්ථාව ලබාදෙයි. එය ඉටුකර දීමට පවරන්නේ මා හටය. ඒ වනවිට ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන්වහන්සේගේ

තේවාහාර රාජකාරිය මා සිදුකල නිසාවෙනි.

මෙතුමා සමඟ උඩමලුවට (බෝ සමීඳු වෙත) යන මා එතුමාගේ දැකින් සිටුරු පිරිකර, මල් පහන් සහ සුවඳ දුම් පූජා කරවා පඬුරු බඳවා සෙත් පිරිත් සජ්ජායනා කර දෙවියන්ටද පින්පෙන් දී අතෙහි පිරිත් නූල් බැඳ එතුමා ඇතුළු සොල්දාදුවන්ගේද ජීවිත ආරක්ෂා කරදෙන සේක්වායි භාර භාර විය.

මේ ආශීර්වාදයත් එතුමා දියත් කල හැම මෙහෙයුමක් සාර්ථකත්වයට හේතු වූ බව අප සමඟත්, නාහිමිපාණන්වහන්සේ සමඟත් කොතෙකුත් කියා ඇත.

මෙතුමා මා දූත හඳුනාගන්නේ මේ සිද්ධි මාලාව පසුබිම් කරගෙනය. එතුමා දුටු මුල් දිනයේම මා තුල ඇති වූයේ දැඩි හිත මිතුරුකමකි. එතුමාගේ පෞර්ෂත්වයත්, අවංකත්වයත්, ශ්‍රද්ධාවත්, නිහතමානීත්වයත් මුවහ රැදී මඳ සිනහවත් කඩිසරකමත් එයට හේතු පාදක විය.

එතුමා බොහෝ වේලාවට ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන් වහන්සේ වන්දනා මාන කිරීමට පැමිණෙන්නේ රාත්‍රී 9.00 ට පමණය. දෙවියන්ගේ පැමිණීම එවන් වේලාවන් හි සිදුවන බව එතුමා විශ්වාස කලා විය හැක.

ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන් වහන්සේගෙන් ගිලිහී බිම පතිත වී තිබුණ ශාඛ කොටසක් දුටු මා පුළුන් රොදක දවටා සුරයකට බහා එතුමාගේ ගෙලෙහි ආරක්ෂාවක් වශයෙන් පැළඳු මොහොත මට අද වගේ මකය. කිසිදා එය අමතක නොවනු ඇත.

දිනක් දහවල 1.00ට පමණ මා උඩමළුවේ පන්සලේ (බෝ මළුවේ) සැතපී සිටින වේලාවේ මාගේ කාමරයේ ජනේලයට තට්ටු කරන හඬ ඇසී අවධි වී ජනේලය ඇර බැලුවෙමි. මා ඒ මොහොතේ දුටුවේ කතාකර කීමටත් නොහැකි ඉමහත් කලබල ස්වරූපයෙන් සිටිය අනුරාධපුර ජාතික රෝහලේ සේවයේ නියුතුව සිටිය ප්‍රසව හා නාරි රෝග විශේෂඥ වෛද්‍ය කපීල ගුණවර්ධන මහතාය. එතුමාගේ මුවෙන් පිටවූයේ ඇදහිය නොහැකි මෙවන් වදන් පෙලකි. "හාමුදුරුවනේ, හාමුදුරුවනේ කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතා මේ දැන් බෝම්බයකට අනුවෙලා". දැනගත් විගසින් මේ ආවේ. ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන් වහන්සේට භාරයක් වෙන්න. මාද කලබලයෙන් මළුව දහවල් දෙකට අරින තුරු දොරටු වසා තබන වේලේ නාහිමිද දහවල සැතපී සිටින මොහොතේ අවසර ගැනීමටත් නොහැකි වේලාවේ මේ සම්ප්‍රධායත් කඩා එතුමාගේ වටිනා ජීවිතය ගැන හිතා අප දෙදෙනා වසා තිබුනු ගේට්ටු ඇර බෝ සමීඳු සම්පයටම ගොස් වැද පුදා ජීවිතය බේරා දෙන ලෙසට ඇයද භාර වූනෙමු.

ජෙනරාල් විමලරත්න මහතා ඇතුළු කිහිප දෙනෙක් මේ මොහොතේ ජීවිතාක්ෂ-
යට පත් වූ බවට ආරංචි පැතිර ගියහ. කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතා කම්පනයෙන්
සිහිසුන්ව සිටි බැවින් බේරා ගැනීම සඳහා ගුවනින් අනුරාධපුර ජාතික රෝහල
වෙත ගෙන ඒමට සියල්ල සූදානම් කර තිබුනද කොළඹ ජාතික රෝහල වෙත
ගෙනයනු ලැබීය. මෙහිදී එතුමා මුළු රටක් කම්පාවට පත් කරමින් ජීවිතයෙන්
සඳහටම සමුගන්නා ලදී.

බෝම්බයට අසුවූ අරාලිතුඩුවේ සිට අනුරාධපුරයටත්, අනුරාධපුරයේ සිට
කොළඹටත් රැගෙන යනතුරු එතුමාගේ වටිනා ජීවිතයේ හුස්ම පොදු බොහෝ
වේලාවක් නිරුද්ධ නොවී රැඳී තිබුනේ උතුම් ජය ශ්‍රී මහා බෝධීන් වහන්සේ
කෙරෙහි එතුමා තුල තිබුන දැඩි විශ්වාසය හා ස්‍රද්ධාව නිසාමය.

එතුමා තේරුම් ගත් බොහෝ දෙනෙක් එතුමාට අවංකවම ආදරය කළහ. ඉන්
එක් අයකු වන්නේ මුලින්ද නම සඳහන් කර ඇති විශේෂඥ වෛද්‍ය කපිල
ගුණවර්ධන මහතාය. මෙතුමාගේ සහාපතීත්වයෙන් අනුරාධපුරයේ මහා රෝහල
ඉදිරි පස වට රවුමේ කොබ්බෑකඩුව ශ්‍රී මනානන්දේ පිළිරුවක් ඉදිකර ඇත.

මෙම රෝහලේ “ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව නමින් දැඩි සත්කාර ඒකකය”
ඉදිකිරීමටද මුල් වූයේ කපිල ගුණවර්ධන මහතාය.

මේ රෝහලේම මෙතුමා සමඟ සහෝදරත්වයෙන් සේවය කල ප්‍රසව හා
නාර්ට්‍රික් රෝග විශේෂඥ වෛද්‍ය සද්ධා හේමප්‍රිය මහතාගෙන්ද මේ කටයුතු
වෙනුවෙන් ලැබුණු සහයෝගය සිහිපත් කල යුතුමය.

සෑම වර්ෂයකම අගෝස්තු මස 8 වැනි දින එතුමාගේ දයාබර බිරිඳ ලලී
කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැණිකේ දූ දරුවන්, ඥාතීන් පිළිරුව අභියස හමුදා සහභාගීත්-
වයෙන් පූජ්‍ය පුජෝපහාර පවත්වා අටමස්ථානයේ හා අවට විහාරස්ථානයන් හි
ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේලා භේදනාසික ලංකාරාමයට වැඩම කරවා සඟසතු දානය
පිංකමක් පවත්වා එතුමාට පිං පමුණුවති.

රට දූ සාමය වෙනුවෙන් උදාර ජීවිතය පූජා කල “ශ්‍රේෂ්ඨ යුග පුරුෂයාණෙනි
ඔබට මා මෙසේ නිවන් සුව පතමි”.

අනුරාධපුර ලංකාරාමාධිකාරී
උතුරු මධ්‍යම දිසාවේ ප්‍රධාන අධිකරණ සංඝනායක
රුළුපනාවේ ධම්ම ජෝති නාහිමි.

මා හඳුනාගත් ජෙනරල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව

1986 වසරේ අගෝස්තු මාසයේ කිසියම් දිනෙක වචනියාව යුද්ධ හමුදා කඳවුරේ ධර්ම දේශනාවක් පැවැත්වීමට අවස්ථාව ලද මට එහි දී ජෙනරාල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතාට හඳුනාගැනීමට අවකාශය ලැබිණි. එදා පටන් එතුමන් මරණයට පත්වන තුරුම අප තුල තිබුණේ අසීමිත බැඳීමකි.

ශ්‍රී ලංකා ඉතිහාසයේ පමණක් නොව ලෝක ඉතිහාසයේම යුධ විරුවන් සුලභ වුවත් මනුෂ්‍යත්වයෙන් හෙබි යුධ විරුවන් අතිශයින් දුර්ලභය. එවැනි සෙන්පතියෙකු වූයේ අන් කිසිවකු නොව ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව විරුවාණෝය.

සභායාං යෝජිතාං මධෙය

බහවං බභිග ධාරිණං

අසි සංඝට්ට සංඛානා

විපච්ඡිංගෙණු දුර්ලභාං

යන සංස්කෘත ශ්ලෝකය අනුව සභාවේදීත්, කාන්තාවන් මැදත් කඩු දරන විරයෝ බොහෝ වෙති. එහෙත් කඩුවෙන් කඩුව ගැටෙන ගිනි පුපුරු නැගෙන සත්‍ය යුධ භූමියේ සිටින යුධ විරුවෝ දුර්ලභයහ.

එවැනි යුධ සෙනෙවියෙකු වූ මෙතුමා රණශූරයන් අතර රණශූරයෙකි. විරයන් අතර විරයෙකි. 1987 වසරේ අවම වෙඩි බලයකින් හා උපරිම මිනිස් බලයකින් යුක්තව මෙතුමන් විසින් මෙහෙයවන ලද, වඩමාරවිටි මෙහෙයුම ලක් යුධ ඉතිහාසයේ සුවිශේෂිතම ක්‍රියාත්මකයයි. එදා උතුරු නැගෙනහිර දෙපළාතෙම අඥාපති වූ මොහු ශ්‍රී ලංකා යුද්ධ හමුදාවේ ප්‍රසාදයට පත්ව සිටි ශ්‍රේෂ්ඨතම හමුදා නායකයාය. නායකයෙකු සතුව තිබිය යුතු සියලු ගුණයන්ගෙන් පිරි මෙතුමන් සිය රට පිරිස් මෙහෙයවූයේ කරුණාබර හදවතිනි. මේ නිසා මෙතුමන් කෙරෙහි බැඳුණු පොදුජන හා සෙබල සෙනෙහෙ සිත අසීමිත විය. හමුදා සෙබළුන් තම දරුවන් ලෙස සැලකූ මෙම අභිත සෙන්පතියා ඔහුනට සැමවිටම පියෙකු විය.

කිසි විටෙක ජාතිවාදියෙකු හෝ ආගම්වාදියෙකු නොවූ මෙතුමා සියලු ජාතීන්ට සියලු ආගමිකයන්ට සැලකුයේ එකම අයුරිනි.

අපේ සිංහල රාජාවලියේ තවත් එක් නමක් වූ ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව නාමය ඉතිහාසගත වූයේ මද්දුම බණ්ඩාර, වීරපුරන් අප්පු වැනි වීරුවන් ලෙසිනි. පන්සලට, පල්ලියට, කෝවිලට සිය යුතුකම් මැනවින් ඉටුකළ අතර අසරණ ජනතාව වෙනුවෙන් කල සේවය අමරණීය වේ.

දේශපාලන බල ලෝභිත්වය නිසාදෝ 1992 අගෝස්තු මස 8 වෙනි දින යාපනයේ අරාලි තුඩුවේ දී මෙතුමා ඝාතනය කරන ලදින් අද දක්වා ම එතුමන් ස්මරණය කරන්නෝ හුදෙක් රට දෑය සමය සුරකින්නෝය.

එතුමා නැවතත් අපගේ ධරණී තලයේ ම ඉපදේවා යි ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමින් නිවන් සුව පතමි.

උතුරු කලුතර දෙදියවල ශ්‍රී ධර්මාරාම පිරිවෙන්හි පරිවේණාධිපති,
ශ්‍රී ආරාමෝපාලිංගික මල්වතු මහාවිහාර පාර්ශවයේ කතිකාචාර්ය කුඩා ගෝනදුව
උත්තරවේනියාරාමාධිපති, ත්‍රිපිටකවේදී, ශාස්ත්‍රපති
සුජ්‍ය කදුරුදුවේ සුගතවංස ස්ථවිර



I remember meeting...

...Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa sometime in 1973. It was in the compound of St Theresa's, Thimbirigasyaya. He had brought his wife Lali to church for morning 8.15 mass. Whilst she was praying he was reading a newspaper in the car.

No sooner he saw me than he jumped out of the car and had a long conversation about the church. It was the beginning of a friendship that lasted to his dying day.

On and off we met and as he climbed the steps of the of the Army ladder, he kept on expressing his deep sense of the value of life. This manifested itself in his concern for all people.

I remember being at his home one evening before he died. We were seated in the verandah, when he directed my attention to a window opposite and said can you see the shadow on the window? That's my guardian angel? Someone was keeping a tab on him. But he was not worried.

Later in the evening two officers came after a very strenuous spell of duty somewhere. Denzil excused himself and met them and insisted that they take their supper and then get back.

That was Denzil all the way through. Concern for others was foremost in his mind. And much more for the members of his family. One of the things he often used to say was that he was looking forward to the day when he could relax with his family and go out for swims with his children.

I fully agree with Gen. Gerry De Silva who said that Gen Denzil was trusted, admired and highly respected by also Tamils of every political tincture for his sterling qualities of fair play, honesty and integrity.

Rev. Fr. Neil Dias Karunaratne. C S s R.



I first met General Denzil on the day before the Colombo leg of the Bradby Shield Rugby encounter in 1969, when he was coaching the Trinity College team and I was leading the Royal College team. From that day onwards, until the tragic loss of this great son of our nation on the 8th of August 1992, I had the honour of closely associating with him as his teammate on the Army rugby team and as his subordinate officer in the Armoured Corps. I have served under his leadership in several military operations and I consider myself very fortunate to have been in that position of association.

It is very rarely that all the qualities of a good sportsman, an excellent leader, a skillful commander and a true gentleman are all embodied in one outstanding person. General Denzil was such an exemplary individual.

The quote in the last New Year Greetings Card I received from him before his untimely death sums up his military philosophy in a quote from Sun Tzu: "A skilled commander seeks victory from the situation and does not demand it from his subordinates." General Denzil was such a truly skilled commander.

Many readers of this note will have their own unique memories of this giant among men. I share this treasured card and a photograph I have had with me for all these years with the readers, in the hope that this will give the readers a glimpse of General Denzil through my eyes as well.



**Harin Malwatte.
Retired Lt Col of the
Armoured Corps.**

“DENZIL – A SPORTSMAN BEYOND PLAYING FIELDS

I had the pleasure of collaborating with Denzil in sporting projects in addition to the close friendship shared by our families.

Denzil excelled in elite level sport, initially in the National Rugby League and subsequently army sport programs. Working alongside him as an official of the Sri Lanka Ministry of Sport, what became evident was his commitment to share his expertise and give of his best to help his men achieve their sporting goals and dreams.

One such highlight was his vision to voluntarily implement a sport and recreation program in Jaffna back in 1987. His aim was to improve the quality of life for all people residing in the district, building a foundation of genuine harmony through participation in an active lifestyle.

Hallam & Barbara Pereira. Family Friends Living in Australia.”



“ I was introduced to Denzil by Lali in the 1960's, when Denzil was head over heels in love with Lali. They were affectionately referred to as "The Patiyas". When Nadé and I were resident in Camberley, Surrey, United Kingdom. In 1974 Denzil was sent to staff college, Camberley, Surrey, U.K. for further training. He was accompanied by his loving wife Lali, most part of their free time was spent with us. Denzil was respected and liked greatly by the other participants who came from several other countries.

Denzil was a gentleman to his fingertips, a sincere friend, a good husband, and a doting father. He was a treat to humanity, an exceptionally kind nature and will live in our hearts and prayers endlessly.

Kalvi Nadeswaran. Family friend.”

“AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN

I only had the pleasure of knowing Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa (Uncle Denzil) for the first 13 years of my life. Much of what I know of him was conveyed by my parents, who were long-time family friends.

Truthfully, I only derived an appreciation for Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa's achievements following his unfortunate demise. This was through the many accolades and tributes which describing a most highly ranked war hero and National treasure.

I daresay this was owing to his qualities as a gentleman superseding even his decorated career. For I recall a humble man with impeccable manners and a down to earth manner of speaking. Completely devoid of the ego characteristic of other high ranking men in whichever walk of life. He had a kind word and a shy smile for everyone he encountered and as a result was loved by all.

Not many people receive a message of condolence from their military opposition upon their passing. Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa's ability to fight the good fight with honour had clearly earned him the respect of friend and foe alike. In the eyes of a thirteen year old boy, this is the true measure of a man and an example to which one could only aspire.

Michael Pereira. Presently living in Australia.”



“**Late Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa.**

An officer and a gentleman of the highest caliber.
Your untimely loss is a misfortune for Sri Lanka.
May you attain Nibbana.

Asita Abayasekera. T.C.K. 1957-1968.”

“ I Worked for Late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa closely for two years during the height of terrorism in Northern Province. He is an extraordinary human being full of commitment and an honest leader with human qualities which majority lacks. He is a leader with vision and wisdom for rightful decision making. His energetic charisma that was devoted to the task in achieving the objective within the limited timelines was well respected and accepted by all levels senior and junior to him. He held a very calm and quiet composure who had the ability to give a hearing to all levels. For him Army was his second home where he looked after his men like his own children. We pray for his soul to be in God’s heavenly kingdom.”

Colonel (Retd) Ranjith Rupasinghe.”



“ Having known him so well as a coach, a mentor and a leader I fail to find words in the dictionary to describe him. Perhaps he was too pure to live in this world. I can write a thousand incidents where he displayed his humane character whilst leading men into battle. One lifetime is not sufficient to write all of his deeds because they were all shining qualities of leadership in various of facets of what our religious leaders preach about.

Maj. Gen. (Retd) Nihal Marambe. T.C.K. / S.L. Army.”



“ The year 1954 I was in the Trinity College university entrance form (form 11),I first came to hear of a student in the junior school whose name was Denzil Kobbekaduwa. He was the nephew of my classmate Kavan Rambukwella of rugby fame. I came to know that Denzil is an able athlete and had also been in the junior school cricket and rugby teams. He had excelled in these activities. He had also taken part in many other academic activities and was found to have leadership qualities and was appointed as the senior prefect. His keenness to join the Army resulted in

giving up his senior prefect ship at Trinity College & also gave up the idea of receiving the coveted Ryde Gold Medal for the Best all round student. He had played in the college 1st xi cricket, 1st xi hockey and 1st xv rugby teams and earned College colours for hockey and the lion for Rugby football. He was the Vice-captain of the Hockey team & Captain of the Rugby team.

After leaving school, as expected he had joined the Ceylon Army (Sri Lanka Army). Some of his activities in the army are mentioned in the excellent book "Road to Nandikadal" written by Major General Kamal Guneratne. He was highly respected and loved by both the soldiers and officers. His unelected death is a tremendous loss to Sri Lanka.

Dr. Samson Herat. T. C. K. / Former Survey General - Sri Lanka.”



“It gives me a great satisfaction to write the following lines on this great personality; My memories runs back to 1991 when as a young Sub Lieutenant I was send to Anuradhapura Div. HQ as the Navy Liaison Officer (NLO) to coordinate Naval support for the ongoing Operation Balavegaya in Vettalaikerni in the North-Eastern Sea board. As my Fast Attack Craft (P453 in 1991, I was the Second in Command) was under repair after developing an engine defect I was ordered to go and establish a HF Communication set at Rear HQ of Brigadier Denzil Kobbekaduwa. My first impression of him ran along with many military leaders that I have read through the books; starting from WW II to Falklands. When he came down one day to A 'Pura to brief the staff of what is happening in the shores of Vettalaikerni, and what is required to be done, I must say that it reinforced my impressions. Needless to say he was an inspiration for me as a young officer, with everything of his; from speech, language, personality, and the cakes his wife (as i was told at that time) made available to us!

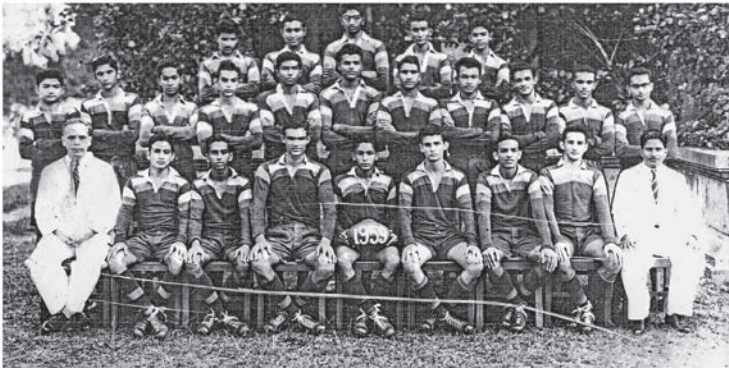
I must admit that we young officers in 1990-1991 era were eager to hear his voice in the communication channels sometimes 'christening' senior officers, all in English, flowing as cascading water much to our delight that some of our seniors getting Denzil's Dose!

But for what he left with us, we made it happen! We made sure that we lead our own flotillas and fleets to victory by same charisma and character that I / We were blessed to be groomed with.

Commodore Y.N. Jayarathna. RWP RSP USP psc MSc”
(Defence Studies) MSc (Hydrography)



LATE GENERAL DENZIL LAKSHMAN KOBBEKADUWA



1959-60 1ST XV RUGBY TEAM

1ST Row Standing

N.T.Madugalle,M.Peiris, W.H.B.de Soysa, C.H.Seneviratne,V.I.Kodituwakku

2ND Row Standing

W.Ilangantilake, N.Halangoda, J.S.Ratwatte, T.P.Herman, I.W.Jayawardena, S.C.de Silva, G.Fernando, H.Churchi, R.Madena, R.W.Madugalle, P.Samarakoon

Seated

C.J.Orioff(Principal), M.Takwaatte, M.Azain, E.D.K.Rolet, D.L.Kobbekaduwa(Captain),P.A.Bultjens, D.Janakiram, K.Murray, P.Madugalle(coach)

“Having played Rugby for Trinity College 1st XV in 1959 under Denzil’s captaincy. I could say that he was a leader who did inspire his team-mates to give off their best. An ideal personality for the Armed forces.His early death is a great loss to us all.

Rihal Madugalle. T.C.K.
291/A, D.S.Senanayake Street, Kandy”

“I had the privilege and the good fortune to serve as a Battalion Commander under Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa who was the most loved and respected Divisional Commander in the Sri Lanka Army when he was alive.

Lt. Col. Anil Amarasekera (Retired) T.C.K. / S.L. Army.”



“Denzil was a close friend at Trinity, Sandhurst and the Army. He came to Sandhurst an year after me. We played Rugby together for Trinity and the Army.

He was very unfairly treated by the Government placing him on Compulsory Leave without any justification. He was later reinstated without any charges against him. This never demoralized him and he turned out to be one of the best Generals whose drive and determination played a major part in defeating the LTTE.

He had a lovely personality. His service to the Country is incomparable, & he lead from the front and was fearless. He set an excellent example for others to follow.

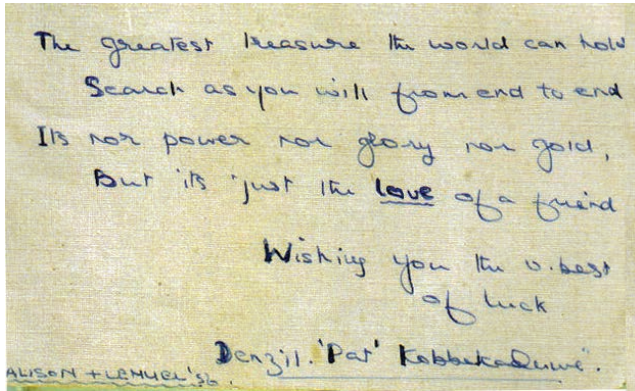
Sena de Sylva T.C.K. / S.L. Army. (Retd)”



“Denzil, the team captain, stood up for me when a senior master tried to prevent me from playing for Trinity saying that at 15 years, I was too young. However I played thanks to Denzil. Denzil demonstrated his outstanding leadership qualities even as a schoolboy.

Jayantha Jayewardene Trinity rugby captain 1961.”

“ I have been a classmate of Denzil and this is what he wrote in my autograph and at a tender age of 16. One should appreciate his concern for others which he demonstrated all through his life



I will enumerate another two incidents,

1. I was playing for Havelocks in 1961 and in the Kandy match played at Nittawala; Denzil was playing as Fullback for Kandy. I was almost 200 lbs and when I got the ball about 25 yards from the line and only Denzil to beat I went straight at him expecting him to move, which was some other would have done, but he bent down and gave me the head on crash tackle and I went reeling and I appreciated his courage to have done that.
2. I was taken to the Army well past my prime and was stationed at Haputale and there was a passing out parade and the salute was taken by Maj. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa. I as a Captain was standing on the other side of the parade grounds and Denzil saw me and at the end of the parade to the surprise of every one he walked right across and spoke to me and invited me to his table. Here I appreciated his love for a friend which broke the barriers of the ranks in Army

Gamini Weerasinghe. T.C.K. / Plantation Industry,”

“Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a man of uncompromising resolve. This resolve was fueled by his fierce loyalty to his subordinates, his unrivalled resilience, and his leadership both on and off the Rugby field. A man of great distinction with an uncompromising demeanor towards honesty to all he associated with, without fear or favour.”

Fred Prins T.C.K. presently living in Australia



“If anyone had suggested in 1968 that there would be a reunion fifty (50) years later, I would think them bonkers!!! The truth is that well-meaning people like you, Shanti and Iswan along with others have decided to reunite our fellowship, team unity, and a collaboration of thoughts and the recollection of times gone by, all good, bad and indifferent. Yes we have all moved on, some overseas some still at home and yet some flying between countries maintaining Lanka as their home base. The common denominators however are that we were and are ALL the products of TRINITY, we wore the jersey with pride, and yes this was sacred as we ALL had to earn it by selection based on merit.

We were all the products of the under 17's under Mr. Hilary Abeyratne, a man with pride and vision and moreover a record of having his teams over a considerable time being undefeated, let alone having the ignominy of having their line crossed!!!

This was our initial grounding at a school representative level, and many of us over the years went on to greater deeds and accomplishments.

The sad fact however is that some of our teammates are not around anymore, some like me, through circumstance, are not present to reminisce on our deeds and times, introduce our spouses, children and grandchildren to each other, and then wish those that are now presently carrying the flag all the best.

I would like to single out one person that we ALL had an association with, I allude to a man of distinction, resolve and pride; I refer to the Late Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa. Denzil was our coach, in my case the Captain of the Kandy Sports Club that I along with Shafi, Sam, D M Bala and Iswan were fortunate to be a part of while still at school, and then progress to the Cup final. We may have been the first school boys to have this honour, I am not completely sure, I can stand corrected.

Denzil was Sandhurst trained, leadership was instilled in him, and I considered him as a mate, a great coach, a great person and above all, a team man with his charges foremost in his consideration. He demonstrated this attribute on numerous occasions.

I would also like to acknowledge Messrs Madugalle and Abeyratne for their dedication in coaching the team, for instilling in us with team play, not individuality and pride in our execution in the game with unrivalled sportsmanship and fair play. I must not fail to mention Messrs. Marathelis and Vitty who supplied us with the footballs all pumped up. Two outstanding grounds men, also Mr. Banda the Bus Driver we teased from time to time.

Last but by no means least, I would like to sincerely thank you all for your team play, friendship and solidarity.

I would surely be proud if all those present can spend a moment of silence to remember those of us no longer here.

Both my wife Lile and I wish all those present a happy time, full of stories and yarns of the past. I feel very privileged to have been associated with all of you. May you and your families have many more reunions; and may your God bless you all.

**Cheers from Australia,
Left Winger Fred Prins.**

*Trinity Colours 68/69, Outstation and Combined schools,
68/69, KSC, and Clifford cup finalist!!! RESPICE FINEM”*

“A true descendent of the great Meegastenna Adigar one of the bravest, compassionate and most loved Dissava of the Kandyan Kingdom. There are no more words to describe him

Dr. Janaka Goonethileka. Researcher , Author.”



“We last met when at Sandhurst he visited me at the London Clinic in 1966 where I was having treatment following my motor accident in Sri Lanka.

'AN OFFICER AND GENTLEMAN' could never have been more aptly stated! Only God will know how life in Sri Lanka could have changed had he lived!

Reggie Rajiah. A Friend.”



“I agree with the sentiments expressed by many that General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a role model to the armed services.

I realized the role he played in the war that killed Sri Lankans of two communities due to an Ethnic divide. He was a General who mixed love and affection to both communities effected during the war along with performing his duties as an Army General. If we had a few more Army personnel like him reconciliation can be achieved without a problem.

God takes away the good early.

Selvadurai Sivapathasuntharam. Attorney at Law, Friend.”

“All his relatives, friends everywhere, irrespective of their colour, caste, political affiliations had the highest admiration, regard & love for this exceptionally great son of Sri Lanka, The vacuum he left can never be filled.

*Herbert Kapuwatte, B.com (Lond),
M.A (Business Administration), Ph. D.”*



“General Denzil Kobbekaduwa as I saw him Such a simple man but a Great Human and a Fearless Warrior – Denzil Kobbekaduwa (1940-1992)

Arjuna Goonetilleke. Architect. Cousin.”



“He was a legend and no doubt he was such a valiant soldier, He didn't care for his life and was always there when the country needed him. His untimely death is a great loss to the entire nation. He will remain alive in our hearts forever.

Tissa Goonetilleke. Relation.”



“An Officer and a Gentlemen, who led the Soldiers from the front to fight and destroy the most ruthless terrorist's, the World has ever seen. Irrespective of Race, Religion, Caste, Creed, he was a highly respected human being and his qualities were an example to all of us. Sadly, he was taken away very early in life, but his legend will live on.

Gehan Bandaranayake. T.C.K.”

“Just as much as I have my greatest Regard for D L K, I can't say I knew him personally. At best I knew of him. Hence I am not someone who can say anything personal.

Best wishes,

Gota Dassanayaka. Legal Profession. / T.C.K.”



“MESSAGE ABOUT DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA FROM A FRIEND

I remember Denzil as a good friend who loved to relax after a hard day's work, typical of a conscientious man. He had a knack of relating anecdotes from the past particularly of his playing days of Rugby for his school, the Army and his Club Kandy S.C, which held us spellbound. Denzil also loved to go across to the Mess for a quick drink when an opportunity was afforded on a holiday .One day Lali and my wife Nixi fancied having a few Vadai's and Denzil gladly volunteered to bring them. Of course Denzil with his inimitable laugh said Anton, first things first and we made a beeline to the mess for a quick one .One drink led to another and by the time we went to the Vadai shop all the vadai's were over. Of course we did not have mobile phones at that time, and when Lali, who was irritated with the delay, contacted the mess boy, the good loyal soul denied, that Major Kobbekaduwa came to the mess. We agreed to settle on a tale of a flat tyre but we got the full barrage of the military at home when we returned without the Vada's, as they refused to believe us .One aspect which was the highlight of his life was his dedication to the Army. I remember the time he was offered a lucrative appointment in a reputed Bank in the private sector but he refused to accept it saying that money was not everything .He placed his career in the Army above everything else and thus made an immense contribution by serving the Army with distinction and laying down his life for his motherland.

Anton Abeysekara. Mercantile Sector / Family Friend.”

“Thanking you for the great opportunity. His leadership style is a great inspiration to all leaders of this country. I belong to the category who believes that the leaders are born. It will be a fitting tribute if you could compile all biographies of leaders produced by Trinity for the benefit of the emerging leaders. All descendants of such leaders may join hands to promote leadership in TCK through a transparent quantifiable young leader’s selection process.

Let our thoughts be a fitting tribute to Denzil Kobbekaduwa.

Dammike Kobbekaduwe. Cousin.”



“Denzil was a Trinitian we can all be very proud of. He had the ability to see the big picture, make strategic decisions and then inspire and lead his team to achieve the established goals. He was a great leader who left the world in a much better place than when he arrived. We miss him. We thank his memory and his legacy.

Regards,

Sarath Weerasinghe. T.C.K.”



“Denzil as we fondly called him, was our 1st XV Rugger Coach at Trinity in 1969 and 1970. He made us tough. Two rounds around Asgiriya after practice and then up to Bahirawa Kande and back to Asigiriya for 2 additional rounds, to complete the day. He never made us do anything what he couldn’t do himself. Praise was given when praise was due and we were chided when we deserved it. More than all he was fair... a gentleman and a decent human being.

Rohan Tennekoon. T.C.K. / Plantation industry Burma (Myanmar)”

“Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa is a “General” to the last letter. He was an inspiration to thousands of soldiers of all ranks throughout his period of command and does continue to be a source of inspiration to many in the Army, who have still been serving since his era. Gen. Kobbekaduwa is a role model of a leader, a comrade and an officer and a gentleman for which, few may be able to compete with him. I always consider it as a privilege and an honour to be serving under him as his A.D.C. at very early stage of my military career and he does and will always remain a role model in my entire life.

Brig. Swarna Bothota. RWP, RSP, USP, psc.”



“FIVE SENTENCES FROM ME ABOUT LT. GENERAL DENZIL KOBKADUWA.

1. He was a great leader and a thorough gentleman.
2. He was a good sportsman and a superb rugby player, coach and referee.
3. I was lucky to serve under the great man at AHQ as a Captain and then later in Pooneryn as a Lt. Col.
4. He was ambitious and had the best Army battle plans at the time.
5. The war prolonged another 17 years w .e. f. late 1992 because of his untimely death.

Regards

Lt Col Shane Balthazaar (Retd)

A former Commanding Officer of the 4th Bn Sri Lanka Light Infantry in Pooneryn, Madagal & Chedikulam 1992 and 1993.”



“He was truly an officer and a gentleman. Sad we lost him, May he rest in peace.

Max Perera (Capt. - CEME+)”

“Denzil was an Officer & Gentleman par excellence. Even an officer of this stature, honour & accomplishment, was acutely mindful of the “Bullet from the back”.. Wither , Sri Lanka - Wonder of Asia!!!!

Dr. Dan Seevaratnam. T.C.K. & Plantation Industry.”



“Denzil Kobbekaduwa has been a good role model to all who knew him.
Charmain Abraham (Nilani Seevaratnam) T.C.K. / Living in U.K.”



“RE. DENZIL.

The day-10 years after Denzil's death. The place: SLNS Karainagar (Jaffna).Event: Billet inspection; Commander Tilak Weerasinghe SLN inspecting - all bed side lockers open. Scene; each and every locker less two, despite regulations not to have anything unauthorized in them had a picture of Denzil. The 2 empty lockers were by empty beds. An eternal SL hero Please also see my article in the CDN of 8 Aug 2006- 'Great Generals remembered'

Maj Gen (Retd.) Lalin Fernando. T.C.K. / S.L. Army.”



“I just read the nice tributes paid to a great officer and gentleman Denzil Kobbekaduwa. His untimely death was a great loss not only to the family and friends but to the whole country. I was fortunate to meet him a couple of times at the CR&FC with my brother Lionel and we enjoyed his company. I can picture him and his laughter, all in all a great personality, missed by all. Rich and poor.

Stanley Almeida. Former G.S.M. Unilever Ceylon.”

“ He was an honorable Soldier who sacrificed his life to the Nation and his name is written in Sri Lankan history in golden letters.

May he attain Supreme bliss of Nibbana!!!

Capt. (Retd) Ariyasena Sooriyabandara, SLE.,”



I wish I had the privilege to know (better), this outstanding officer and gentlemen, who did so much and sacrificed his life for the country. He was very much senior to me in school. Although I was not a ruggerite, I had the good fortune to be on the same playing field (Asgiriya) when he was coaching the TCK first fifteen in the late 60s. May he attain nibbana.

Hiran Herat T.C.K. / World Bank.



“ A great loss to humanity.
Regards,
Nihal Ratwatte. T.C.K. / Plantation Industries.”



“ My rugby team mate and close Alisonian buddy you were a true Officer. & Gentleman.

Malcolm Dias T.C.K.”



*L To R Rear Admiral H. R. Ameraweera, Admiral Clancy Fernando,
Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe.*

“TRIBUTE TO A FINE HUMAN BEING AND A NATURAL LEADER

I, as teenager, became aware of the late Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa's name first as a nippy scrum half of Trinity and Army fame and also as a Sandhurst trained Officer. My enthusiasm for Cricket, Rugger and also as a senior cadet of my school had a direct influence on this awareness.

My naval career which started in 1974 as an Officer Cadet gave me the opportunity to be a part of the military and understand and observe leadership of armed forces from a distance.

Then I had the privilege of meeting the late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa mainly due to closer interaction of armed forces in joint operations to tackle insurrection and terrorism.

In 1981, I, as a young Lieutenant commanding Short Patrol Craft "Tharawa" in Karainagar was assigned as Staff Officer to the Commanding Officer of SLNS Elara (then Senior most Naval Officer in the North) and then Major Kobbekaduwa with my Commanding Officer met at his Jaffna

residency. Major Kobbekaduwa was the Staff Officer to the overall Northern Command. Although the circumstances and the situation in the North was tense, Major Kobbekaduwa after speaking to my Commanding Officer fired a few questions at me to make a quick assessment and to make me comfortable, although he could have easily ignored me given the circumstances and seniority gap. It left me wondering why he did that. He valued all levels of military officer hood and made everyone feel important.

Sri Lanka Navy having suspended playing A Division Rugger in 1983 returned to the fray in 1987 to beat the star studded and all conquering Police Sports Club under Marso in 1989 to enter Clifford Cup final. A surprise telephone call was connected to me and the caller was the late General Kobbekaduwa to congratulate the Navy and wanting to speak to the Captain of the Navy team. I was the Chairman, Rugger and traced Lieutenant Parakrama Samaraweera, the lanky Second row forward from Kingswood, Kandy (Lt. Parakrama Samaraweera made the supreme sacrifice whilst commanding a Fast Gun Boat in 1994 in the Mullativ seas). Late General Kobbekaduwa spoke to both of us congratulated for creating the upset, and conveyed his appreciation to the team and Brian Baptist of Royal and CH & FC fame for his role as the Honorary Coach. The Late General displayed his passion for the game, loyalty to the Military and reached out to those who delivered the impossible, an amazing quality that the late general always practiced.

In 1990 and 1991, many operations were conducted in Karainagar and Kayts and also the landing of Pooneryn and Vetlankani. These circumstances again brought me to the environment of this leader as a Commanding Officer of Fast Gun Boats "Sooraya" and "Ranakame", which were ferrying troops and providing. Late General by this time was familiar with the role of naval gun fire support for landing. The late General was

present amongst the troops. Late General, by this time, was familiar with the role of Gun Boats and my name and spoke to me several times in the company of many officers and my Northern Naval Commander and identified me specifically as the "37 man". (37 is a caliber of a gun on Fast Gun Boats). His unique ability to remember names, incidents and display of appreciation, gratitude and recognition of his subordinates made him a natural and practical leader.

I thank my former Unilever colleague Sunil Keppetipola for his initiation and the opportunity to pen down my memories that lived only with me for almost 4 decades as a sincere tribute to a fine human being, an effective military commander and a natural leader. He, in the process has given us lessons to learn, qualities to practice and values to inherit.

May he attain Nibbana.

***Admiral (Retd.) Thisara Samarasinghe.
Former Commander Sri Lanka Navy.”***



“General Kobbekaduwa was an officer and a gentleman with highest regard for subordinates under him. His leadership attributes were extremely rare and people were so willing to work for him. He was firm, fair and friendly. His love for the country and fellow under him was great and he always set an example to the others. His untimely demise was one of the most significant losses Sri Lanka suffered during the thirty years old conflict

***Admiral (Retd.) Dr. Jayanath Colombage
Former Commander S.L. Navy.”***

“ I fully endorse Adm.Jayanath's sentiments. I was privileged to have Gen.Kobbekaduwa as a 'Kalyana Mithra' from the day he joined the Regiment until his untimely demise for more than 36 long years. May he attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.

Maj. Gen.(Retd.) Tilak Paranagama. S.L. Army.”



“ General (Late) Denzil Kobbekaduwa can be described as one of the finest Generals, great leaders, warriors and an exemplary officer & gentleman that I have come across so far and a role model to all of us. He served the motherland with great ambition, commitment and dedication to achieve the current status of a peaceful Sri Lanka. He is one of the main stakeholders of this achievement.

General Kobbekaduwa was the one who at the outset emphasized the need of winning hearts and minds of people, welfare of the soldiers and their families and a need of a comprehensive national security strategy as a contributory factor of winning the war against terrorism. As I see, he was a visionary leader of a rare caliber with a foresight of which we have seen the dividends today.

His untimely death at Araly Point on 08th August, 1992 was a significant setback we suffered during the period of conflict. He passed away feeling content as a man who had fully accomplished his patriotic mission.

May he attain Nibbana!

Maj. Gen. (Retd) Milinda Peiris. S.L. Army.”

“Soldiering under him was challenging, but not disappointing. He was a gentleman warrior and a wonderful comrade in arms. It was a privilege to have served under him. Above all, General Denzil was a shining example of a fine human being. He is gone, but not forgotten.

*May He Attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.
Brigadier (Retd) Sri Mudannayake. S.L. Army.”*



“I had the privilege of working under him, as a Grade 2 Staff Officer during the Southern Insurrection and later in the Eastern Operations during the Separatist War. Incidentally my successor Col Nalin Alwis unfortunately made the supreme sacrifice along with the General.

My services under Gen Kobbekaduwa were extended as a Battalion Commander commanding the 6 Bn Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment – beginning with Elephant Pass, I had the good fortune to be part of all the Operations he commanded.

The General’s biggest and the most significant trait was his quick decision making in combat while defending his subordinates be it in triumph or adversity. His encouragement of his troops was unparalleled.

When my battalion was under siege in Elephant Pass for 24 days in 1991, we defended not only because our lives depended on it, but for our General who would stand by us in every decision we were to make. It was a pure sense of triumph not just relief when he reached us leading the ‘Operation Balavegaya’ at Elephant Pass.

I stand in salute of you, Sir, a true soldier in every sense of its meaning. May you attain Nibbana.

Major General Sanath Karunaratne RWP,RSP,VSV,USP,psc”

“Here is what I have to say about Gen. Kobbekaduwa.

"I first met Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa when he captained Trinity at Rugby in 1969 and I was playing for Royal. Thereafter I had many interactions with him both as a player and as a fellow rugby referee. He was one of the most competent rugby referees in Sri Lanka. When he was the President of the Sri Lanka Rugby Referees' Society I happened to be his Deputy. He worked in harmony with the other Referees not only to improve the refereeing standards at the time but also to ensure their safety. In his capacity as the President he was kind yet firm and effective in his decision -making. This was a time when the Rugby referees were being harassed and at times man-handled by unruly, uninitiated and bullishly partisan spectators. The Society's requests and reminders to the Union regarding crowd control were not being effectively handled. The last straw was when fellow referee, Rodney Patternot, was manhandled at a particular Rugby match played at Police Park, if I remember right. At an emergency meeting the Society took a firm decision to refrain from officiating at matches until steps were taken to remedy the situation. I remember the following week-end at a match played at Longden Place, no referee turned up and Indrajit Coomarasamy, who was a spectator had to stand in as referee. The important thing is that Denzil stood his ground until firm assurances were given by the Union to remedy the unfortunate trend. I enjoyed working as Denzil's Deputy as I always did in my association with him. It is a real pity that the country lost such a fine officer and a gentleman. They do not make people like that anymore. Somewhere that mould had got misplaced!

U.L.Kaluaratchi

Played for Royal (1959-1962); University (1963-65);

CR& FC (1963 and 1967)

***Rugby Referee; one time Deputy President of the
SL Rugby Referees' Society.”***

“Denzil Maama was a father to us and was my sister Swanthi's legally appointed guardian since the premature demise of my parents in 1986. Denzil Maama's death 6 years later had a devastating effect on my siblings and myself. Despite his busy schedule and being stationed out of Colombo most of the time (and the massive responsibilities he held), he never failed to periodically enquire after us and I knew that he was always there for us. From my perspective, I made sure that I had his blessings before any major decisions were made. Although he was a high up in the Armed Forces and a very important national figure, he was so very approachable, very warm and he was always with a smile. He had a very positive attitude towards life in general. This is not surprising considering his popularity and admiration of him across a wide cross section of society. He was also a humble man. I vividly remember when he was escorting my in-laws to their car (and opened the car door for them) when they were leaving the funeral of my grandfather (Denzil Maama's father). This simple act really touched them (my in-laws). That was the last time I saw him. He was one of a kind and we will never have another person like him ever. With his untimely death the nation lost a true hero and I lost a father.

Pulinda Samarakkody. Nephew / S.T.C. / Banker.”



“I had the privilege of knowing this heroic gentleman for a short while during the very early stages of my life. I have distant memories of the times when we used to go to see him when he was in Colombo. I particularly remember an instance when he created a mango in my hands 'by magic' as it seemed to appear from nowhere to the surprise and dismay of my big brother who couldn't believe it when Denzil Maama showed him how 'nangi can make mangoes by magic'.

I am also thankful to him for it was upon his request that I was able to get

into a leading school in Colombo from which my application was first rejected. I later heard from my school Principal of that time, that it was a request she couldn't refuse because she heard of the death of this great man the very next day that she received the request from him about my admission.

From all that I have heard of Denzil Maama from various people I've met throughout my life I have come to realize what a loving person he was and how much his family and everyone in the country looked up to him, respected and loved him. Hearing these stories always makes me wish that I could have known him for a little longer.

But unfortunately all we have are these great memories of this lovely person, which people will cherish forever and talk about for years to come as they do even now after 26 years of his demise.

Maneesha Keppetipola. Niece. / Methodist College.”



“Before I was born Denzil Maama and Lali nanda had always been there to lend a helping hand and they guided my family in every way possible.

I was fortunate to associate with a person like Denzil Maama during the first 9 years of my life. He was such a brave soul and his compassion towards everyone is something that is remarkable and that is not seen in most people.

I still remember the day he was killed in action and as a nation how everyone mourned. He was such a great man who will be remembered for many more years to come.

Gayana Keppetipola. Nephew / S.T.C.”

“DEAR UNCLE,

We lost a national hero 26 years back but your name will always be in our memories. May you rest in peace.

Rohan Dullewe and family from Sirimalwatta Kandy.”



“He was an officer and a gentleman of the highest class and fought for our country till the last breath. A great Trinitian

Deva Amunugama. T.C.K.”



“I am the loser for not being old enough to have known him personally. However, from what I have heard of him, I believe that he was the role model for the words "An officer and a gentleman".

I salute you Sir.

Sunil Panabokke. T.C.K.”



“A soldier par excellence. A great friend and a human being. Difficult to be replaced. May he attain Nibbhana.

Col. (Retd) Saliya Udugama, T.C.K. / S.L. Army.”



“He was loved by the soldiers & the civilians, Both Sinhalese and Tamils.

Maj. Gen. Sanath Panabokke. S.L.Army.”



“DEAR DENZIL,

I write on behalf of my immediate family to say we are indeed very proud of you and your demise is such a great loss to our beloved Country.

Jenny Tennekoon Samarasinghe. Cousin.”

“I WISH TO SUBMIT MY SENTIMENTS ON LATE GEN. KOB-BEKADUWA. HERE IT IS...

Gen. Kobbekaduwa as he's fondly referred to was a true hero of our battered nation, who stood for its territorial integrity, People's sovereignty and unitary character of its nature. Further he was a true patriot who had an abiding love for the motherland and its people. The 30 year protracted terrorist war which ravaged Sri Lanka caused the lives of thousands of lives including this splendid son of Mother Lanka. He had more than a fine military brain with an unimpeachable integrity. However no purpose will be served merely by commemorating this giant military officer every year, Sri Lankans who are left behind and shared those lofty patriotic ideals for the achievement for which he strived, must gird their loins and continue his struggle for the defense of our Country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and preservation of the unitary character of our constitution. For if we abandon it , We let down this great patriot who breathed his last 26 years ago.

Devaka. S. Jayasuriya.

Editor in Chief - Sinhala Bauddhaya News Paper

Executive Board Member - Sri Lanka Mahabodhi Society. Estd 1896

Ex – Leverite.”



“A glowing tribute to an officer and a gentleman, par excellence, the late Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, who made the supreme sacrifice whilst safeguarding the sovereignty of our motherland from the clutches of the ruthless LTTE terrorists. Rest in peace dear comrade.

Swarana Wickramarachi. Ex – Leverite.”

“HONOURING A LIFE TIME “BROTHERHOOD”

While we are all fighting to live our lives, by ourselves...you fought by yourself to give us a better place to fight our life battle...

True it was your dream to end the war...true it was the freedom you paid the price, from your life for...

True it was the steps you kept forward made it all possible...

Thank you brother we all in safe hands...in a safe land...thanks to you...!!!

Much loved – with a great gratitude...

Wajira Dias Pannilaratne. Ex Unilever Ceylon.”



“I am privileged and honored to have had Denzil as my brother. He without any doubt was my role model. My success in my profession was due to my mother’s and Denzil’s guidance and I can unashamedly say that I followed in his footsteps. I am sad and angry with those who cut short our brotherhood time. They would be burning in hell, I have no doubt. It was amazing he found the time to be the head of the family, while doing his job and sports exceptionally; even while national traitors were trying to undermine him unsuccessfully. To me he was King Dutugemunu reborn. It was unforgivable the guilty cut short his life including his family life. I will never forget him, and it is up to the good people of Sri Lanka to ensure he goes down in history alongside the likes of King Dutugemunu.

Dr. Asoka Kobbekaduwa. Retired Consultant in Otorhinolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery. Worked in Sri Lanka & U.K.at consultant level.”



“GEN. KOBBEKADUWA WITH HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS IN THE BATTLE FRONT.

Being the eldest brother in my Family, he was a guiding light to me and my Family! He was a father figure - a dear Friend & Brother, whom I looked upon for guidance when needed and he was always there to offer any advices and assistance!

He was well respected and loved by the people of this Country and I am proud to have been his younger brother!!

Rohan Kobbekaduwa. T.C.K. / Plantation Industry.”



“Whenever I come across Rudyard Kipling’s...If..it’s Denzil that instantly comes to mind...

Russel Tennekoon T.C.K. /Plantation Industries.”

Thank you for the opportunity given to me to remember this great and revered personality. He was a few years senior to me in Trinity, but both being very close friends of the Faisz Musthapha family. I used to meet him in that house almost as a family member quite regularly. I knew him also as one of the great rugby players of the time. Later in his Army career, whenever I used to meet him and admire his unselfish leadership in the Army and ask if I could do anything for him, knowing that he was sacrificing his personal life and his time for the country, his response was always "Machang, if you can, please send some Chewing gum for my boys, they toil with little food and water on the field and Chewing gum helps them to keep going".

This was the man!

Nimal. S. Cooke-Executive Director , Capital Maharaja Group."



“DENZIL: THE SUPER-STAR OF SILK AND STEEL

He lived down the street where we lived. His home, 177, Trincomalie Street, Kandy, served as a rallying point to many: from Trinity boarders who would scoot off and seek a respite; to Trinity's Asgiriya grounds man Marthelis who would patronize the Tavern only a squirt away; to driver Banda and the Mahaiyawa cheer squad leader Cortal dropping in to pay respects. Then there were streams of rugby players he coached seeking counseling, several of whom played years later for the Sri Lanka team and even two of them captained; and many of us simply for the pleasure of chatting with him, often late into the nights.

With his gifted-trade marked-smile he opened doors and hearts and minds. His eyes would capture one's attention, as they would well with affection. It was as if only you mattered to him. He had time for everyone, regardless of station in life.

And in life he was known as the General who was one of the smartest all-rounders that the country had produced. He would often say that his 'modest' accomplishments stemmed from the fountain of rugby from which he derived his credo. It was here, he would say, that he learnt the rough and tumble of life: to fall and then get up; to take and give a tackle; to scrum together and move the line in cohesion; to motivate fellow players and to aspire to the impossible. It was here his talent emerged to detect and select the best in people and mold them into a cohesive unit ---a unit that would give and take a good fight; to display integrity and purpose and uphold right against might. He was the personification of these attributes.



Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa
Good administrator, Rugby player and Coach.

On this August 8, the 26th anniversary of his tragic passing, it is instructive that much of the credo that he drew from, played out in his career.

In the prime of his career, as a distinguished Sandhurst graduate and Army Officer he was unfairly and embarrassingly interdicted by the UNP government in the 1965-70 period, on false accusation of being involved in a coup. He was reinstated with dignity and an implied apology; then hailed as a national hero and elevated posthumously as Lt. General. He should surely have been a decorated General but in a way that he wasn't was a blessing as that special rank has, in our time, been so devalued!

During the period of his suspension Denzil held his head high. He did not allow himself to be sucked in by the political under-currents that was the 'sport' that others indulged in. He took the unfair tackle as a man. He acted like a gentleman of grace. He had the wisdom to know that time and tide will bring out the truth.

Instead he focused on the more rewarding pastime of such pursuits as club rugby and the coaching of Trinity with a passion that displayed that nothing can disturb him.

Denzil's love for sports was beyond the confines of rugby. He was inspired by Duncan White and wished to do what he could in the promotion of athletics. He not only became a board member of the Duncan White Sports Foundation but also stepped forward and organized a Peace Run in honour of White, from Vavuniya to Colombo. On a lighter note:

The Foundation distributed 'T Shirts' with Duncan's monograph on it. At one point Denzil called Vijitha Fernando, who was the man behind the Foundation, and said 'I am surprised how few people know of Duncan. A guy at the one of our relay exchanges asked 'Kawda Yakko may Duncan Kiyanne'? ('Who the devil is this Duncan'!)?

As a Commanding Officer he was reputed for avoiding, to the full extent possible, damage and harm to civilians and displayed an abundance of compassion and humaneness. Wing Commander E. H. Ohlmus, a ruggerite himself, states, Denzil's sense of fair play, learnt on the rugby fields of Trinity College, simply exuded from him, and would certainly have earned for the Defence Establishment every chance of a speedy and just resolution of a totally unnecessary conflict. But that was not to be for two more decades, after the fateful day in Kayts.

It was because of his innate concern for others that the Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwe Trust was in operation for several years in his honour...

providing assistance to disabled servicemen and women and to the families of dead servicemen (and women) and to related village folk.

Denzil remains in the minds of millions of Sri Lankan as a Soldier's Soldier, a Sportsman and a Super-Star.

He was made of a fiber that was rare a blend of silk and steel.

M.V. Muhsin. T. C.K. / World Bank.”



”AS A SIMPLE CITIZEN OF MOTHER LANKA

I was not blessed to receive his leadership during the time of yesterday and today of my life, OH!!! What a loss. May he attain supreme bliss of Nibbana is all what i can Pray for this great Human-being, officer and gentlemen"

Dhammika Jaysuriya. S.T.C./Plantation Industry.”



”I am of the same age group as Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa., being born just a month after the great son of the soil. He was intimately known to people I knew intimately, but never had direct links.

I envy those fortunate enough to associate with him. I wish very much that he be born among us again.

Ranjith Senaratne. Ex Unilever Ceylon.”



”Greatest of all...unbeatable... the gentleman soldier..

Sunil Wickramasinghe. T.C.K. /

Plantation Industry /

Mercantile Sector.”

“ I knew Denzil while in school and after leaving Trinity. I admire him for what he did for the country during the war with the LTTE and the respect he received in the army. Please convey my sincere regards to his family as we honor him for what he did.

Nimal Amerasekara. T.C.K.”



“ He was an exemplary leader and warrior.
Lasantha Silva.”



“ **FOND MEMORIES:**

My encounters with Uncle Denzil were mostly at the lunch table. It was a recurrent practice that I was at Roshani 's for lunch very often be it a week day or weekend, specially during A 'levels and I considered it my second home. Aunty was very generous feeding us with all sorts of goodies. There were the special days when more goodies were laid out on the table when uncle was in Colombo. We used to eagerly await his arrival for lunch.

The discussions were diverse and I remember he always had a habit of testing our general knowledge, I was quite bad at it and tried keeping quiet. However, because of the incapability of keeping my words from being heard mostly made a joke of myself. He always spent time with Roshani's friends when able to the extend his leave. One day he volunteered to drop Tharangi and myself home little knowing where we lived. Once in the Car he had to drive to Wattala and then back again to Ratmalana. I always looked up to him as a Gentleman with high values which are rarely seen in this society. He was a true example of a leader and I will remember and respect him all my life. Rest in Peace Uncle Denzil.

Mrs. Lakmali Hapuarachchi. Family Friend.”

“Denzil came into my fold only in the 1960's; although he was senior to me in school. It was around the mid-sixties that he came to Kandy. Here our friendship grew and we respected each other for our efforts to achieve excellence in our field of work. He played under me for two years and then he went on to Captain the side in 1969. This was a memorable year as he took the team to the Finals of the Clifford cup. We should have won but for the fact we were not as savvy in Law as our opponents - the CRFC with referee Ingleton blowing the whistle so frequently--that some thought unfair. He was great Buddy of mine when it came to traveling to Dimbulla or Darawella. He stayed at my Bungalow the night when he was forced to take many a beer with all his complaints he played a superior game the next day. When he died and the tragic news came to me at my factory in Ja-Ela I was distraught. May he live up there happily”.

Y.C. Chang. T.C.K. /Kandy S.C. / Plantation Industry.”



“GENERAL DENZIL

A great soldier with a heart of gold, a statesman the country never had.

I had a very long association with him as his subordinate. He was professional and demanded high standards and always stood for what is right. A man who was humble in his ways, loved his men, supported his subordinates and was loyal to the core. His absence is a National misfortune.....

Col. (Retd) Rohan Aturaliya. T.C.K. / S.L. Army.”



“Major Denzil Kobbekaduwa was our Chief Instructor at the then Officer Cadet School at Diyatalawa in 1978. For cadets with almost shaven heads, it was surprising to see someone with quite "longish" hair along with the colourful "Stable Belt" of Armour and two-tone uniform. His

lectures were conducted at a "rapid fire" pace and sometimes it was difficult to comprehend the subjects that he taught. Nevertheless, we were spellbound by his supreme knowledge and his colourful personality which was "Cavalry" - all the way! I was privileged to serve him as his first Adjutant when he took over as CO of 1st Recce Regiment SLAC in June 1983. His qualities of leadership, tact and humaneness has been described by all who had come in contact with him. However, for me, one of the most poignant incidents was where he "apologised" to a trooper (a private soldier) for mistakenly admonishing him a day earlier. This was indeed a very rare phenomenon that probably has no comparison anywhere! Subsequently, I served as his G 2 (Operations) at Coordinating Headquarters, Trincomalee and there too every moment under his command was undoubtedly an enriching experience and more so an unparalleled education. What a man! What a Gentleman! What an officer!

Brig (Retd) Rohan Jayasinghe USP LOM / S.L. Army.”



”Denzil was admired by his countrymen for his bravery inspired the youth of his time for his leadership loved by friend or foe for his loving ways brought pride to his kith and kin as a saviour of the Nation. The charm and charisma he possessed will never be matched in eternity

Deshabandu Lankaputra. Mohan Ratwatte. Cousin.”



”Denzil Aiya was a very kind and compassionate person and he has demonstrated these wonderful qualities many a times during the years that I closely associated with him after my marriage to his cousin. I remember once when my father, who had Parkinson syndrome, had come to visit us in Colombo and we took him to Denzil aiya's home in Rosmead

Place. Because my father was very sick he didn't move around much with crowds and generally kept to himself and most of the time people usually left him alone as well. But Denzil aiya from the time we arrived sat only with my father and kept talking to him the whole time we were there without joining the rest of us. I was so moved by his compassion which very few people of our generation possess.

Everyone loved and admired him. He was a person we all looked up to and his opinions always mattered to us. His untimely death was a great loss to us. But memories of his kindness and compassion will be lasting.

Shirani Nedurana Keppetipola. Relation.”



“Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a brave soldier with humane qualities and was able to win the hearts of all. His leadership was always an example to the rest of the nation and proved to all that he was a true Statesman. His untimely demise was a great loss to the nation resulting the war against L.T.T.E. Terrorist getting dragged on for another 17 years at a tremendous cost to Sri Lanka.

May he attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana.

Lathika Nedurana. Relation.”



“Gen, Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a great man no doubt.
Kind regards,
Asoka Weerasekara, Ex Unilever Ceylon.”

“TRIBUTE TO LATE GEN. DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA,

It was both a great honor and a privilege to have served and played rugby for many years under the much loved and revered Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa.

Serving under this iconic legend was both challenging and demanding at times but always rewarding.

An officer and A Gentleman whose honesty, integrity and undivided loyalty to The Army and the Nation was extraordinary.

He was a leader with a strategic mind who was charming, witty, persistent, with an iron determination, who loved soldiering and gave his best at all times inspiring all those under him.

Gen. Denzil was a gritty and fearless gentleman warrior who followed the rules of law at all times and expected the same from his subordinates.

His outstanding leadership, genuine love and care for those who served under him made him one of the most loved leaders who inspired those under his command to perform daunting tasks even under the most difficult and risky situations.

Gen. Denzil's illustrious career over a long period of time in my mind will make him one of Sri Lanka's most successful and outstanding leaders.

He may have passed away but his legacy as a leader and a fine human being will continue to inspire many generations to come.

Thank you Gen Denzil Sir, for all your services to our nation but above all for inspiring us to become better human beings.

May you attain The Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.

Maj. Jith Abeyewardene (Ret.) S.L. Army.”

“ I first met Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa when I was appointed as ADC (Aide de Camp) to him in 1990. He was then the General Officer Commanding 1 Division in Panagoda. I soon realized that he was a true officer and a gentleman. Apart from that, it was evident that he was an exceptionally capable officer with outstanding decision making skills and a person who could inspire the men serving under his command to give their utmost when it was most needed. His leadership skills, especially in decisive battles were legendary.

But the qualities which made him stand out the most were his exemplary courage, determination and his ever present concern for the welfare of the men under his command. He always looked into their physical well-being as well as to boost up their morale. I well remember on the eve of every decisive battle he would go into the midst of his men and encourage and inspire them and instill in them the necessary confidence and self-belief they needed for the difficult task ahead. He always led his men personally in every battle , sharing their trials and tribulations.

After each battle, before he returned to his headquarters, he would visit the casualties in hospital to look into their every need.

On a personal note, I would like to share with you an incident which clearly indicated the humanity and kindness of this great Sri Lankan patriot. When his father passed away he returned to Colombo for the funeral for a few days which, to the best of my knowledge was the longest period of time he spent away from the war front, such was his commitment towards this cause. .He returned to the battle field one day after the traditional 7th day alms giving which happened to be my birthday. He met me personally to give a birthday card and offer me his best wishes. Such incidents do not usually occur as he was a very senior officer while I was a very young and junior Captain .In this, as in other instances, he did not hesitate to cross barriers of rank and protocol, if he thought the situation demanded it.

It was a very touching and revealing incident for me, and one which I will never forget.

It was a tragic day for all Sri Lankans and humanity in general when he was killed in action at Araly Point in the island of Kayts off Jaffna on 8 August 1992. The country lost a great patriot on this day. His void has never been filled and though he is no more with us he is in our hearts and minds forever.

There will never be another Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa.

Brig. Aruna Wijewickrema (retd)

”



“My earliest memories of Denzil Maama are of how patient and kind he was to me when I was about four or five years old. Some days when he returned from work he used to bring me little note books (which were way more interesting than boring clothing!) and how I used to thoroughly enjoy going with him for rugger practices in the evenings. My little mind thought it was a privilege to be able to read his referees rule book too!

Later on he used to patiently decorate Malli's birthday cakes whenever he could, Kudu baked it of course. The rest of us aren't known for being blessed with patience!

We had the pleasure of spending time with him for the last time at our engagement in June 1992. He brought lots of lotus flowers all the way from Anuradhapura for us to use as deco.

Thank you maama for playing an important role in permitting us to live in peace and harmony today. May you rest in peace.

Dilki. Ratwatte Serpanchy. Niece.”

“ A FOND MEMORY,

At Shanilka's 8th birthday, which was a spend the day, I was just after an illness and feeling a bit weak. But of course I had insisted on being brought and staying for the entire thing. Everyone was playing hide and seek and I just couldn't find a good place to hide. Uncle Denzil picked me up and placed me on the window sill inside one of the rooms, told me to hang on tight to the bars, and covered me with the curtain. If he hadn't helped the 'catcher' with a small hint, I might still be there!

Dr. Naazima Kamardeen. Family friend.”



“ A MEMORY:

When I think of Denzil Maama an image of a big bowl of chocolate ice cream with lots of chocolate sauce and nuts for breakfast is what comes into my head followed by an involuntary slurp. This was what we shared when I went to see him with ammi a few days before he went on what sadly was/became his "last assignment".

Ashanthi Edrisinghe (niece)”



“Appreciate very much the opportunity afforded to pen few sentences of a Hero of our time. - **Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa**

No one could ever be able to say, if anyone else in the Triple Forces lived in the Hearts ever so much, as lived by Late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa. He was respected by both Friend & Foe just for being humane.

He believed self-defence, 'not only to be our right but also our duty yet, he was never recognized to be an aggressor'

The Late General was believed to be a grass-root Leader.

He was acknowledged to be replacing Command & Control to Commitment & Cohesion by engaging the hearts, minds of his Troops.

Sadly, the Late General could not realize, this Nation does not welcome such modesty. He was brave and believed deeply in this Country.

No matter how many you meet or how many stories of heroism you hear, every encounter reminds that Late ' General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was Truly Special'

That is why; he becomes a living legend even after 26 years of demise.

Ravi Dahanayake. A friend."



"Lt. GENERAL DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA

Firstly, I wish to ECHO all of what Ravi Dahanayake has said about the Late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa.

Ravi has captured the TRUE essence of the MAN, the late General was.

I would add that he was a TRUE SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN, of the highest class. It was a devastating loss to our country, as a whole, as in the estimation of many and as I have always said, General Denzil Kobbekaduwa should have been the President of our nation and it was only a matter of time, that he would have been our Leader but, very sadly, it was cut short by his untimely demise, at the hands of those who were determined to stop him.

He was a JUST and FAIR, man, in the true sense of the word.

Russell Rajaratnam. S.L. Rugby."

“I still remember the day I was first inducted to the Battle fields in Vettalaikerni South of Elephant Pass. We were Heli dropped in VLK last light on 27 June 1992. It was an unforgettable sight to see; Gen. Kobbekaduwa right in front of us to receive the new batch. That kind of dedication and commitment from a senior officer of that caliber is commendable. His demise was a Great loss to the Army and to the Nation.

Col. Ravi Pathiravithana. psc-SLAC”



“How can one even imagine to confine in a few words or a paragraph or two, a worthy tribute to a great man such as Late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa.

I (Basil Peiris, Colonel at that time) was indeed very fortunate to have had the opportunity of working side by side with General Kobbekaduwa, as his Staff Officer, during the last appointment held by him, as General Officer Commanding 2 Division prior to his untimely demise.

Every single person who had the good fortune of meeting him even briefly, were so taken by his warm charming and humble nature. His charismatic leadership was such,

that every soldier under his command would willingly walk with him to the end of the earth with no questions asked and without any hesitation. In the midst of heavy firing in the field he will still stop to pat the back of a soldier in encouragement, and inquire about the welfare of another.

He did not feel any vengeance or hatred towards the enemy he had to fight, but considered them to be misguided and mislead youth, whom he believed, could be guided and reformed to be responsible citizens. His heart went out to the poor innocent civilians and border villagers, caught

in between, who happened to be the unwilling victims of war.

When it came to Military Discipline the standards maintained by him and acceptable to him was very high. There were no grey areas. He was an Officer and Gentlemen held in high esteem, and he expected the same conduct from each and every officer, and would not condone with any miscreant.

The horrible news of his death sent shockwaves, not only nationally but also internationally. His family, friends, comrades, clergy, every single member of the Armed Forces and Police , every single person who had known him or even heard of him stood shocked and paralysed and it looked as if the whole nation had come to a standstill too stunned to even mourn his death.

The passage of 26 years since the death of this Great Officer, Gentleman and leader has not diminished his memory even by an iota from the minds of each and every one of us who admired and loved him, and would always cherish his memory.

Major General Basil Peiris. VSV USP and Major General Mohanti Peiris. USP”



“**GEN. DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA.**

Denzil took to coaching in 1967. We were without a coach that year even after the first game against Wesley. I met him quite by accident on the streets of Kandy and immediately asked him if he could come and coach us. He replied saying he had never coached before but I encouraged him to give it a try as he had so much experience as a top class player. Two days later he turned up at practice at Asgiriya. I can still vividly remember

him walking in, wearing his yellow Army jersey. It is all history now. He produced the first team to win all their matches in the 60"s. Set a record for the highest winning tally for the Bradby from 1945 [including the famous 56 side] and held it till 1996. Your article does not mention his unbeaten 1967 side which I captained. Quite a few reporters have had selective amnesia about this side. His 1969 side was also unbeaten but drew with St Peters. The recent article on the history of SL rugby posted by Russel T does not mention the record of the 1967 side at all.

In 1969 he captained Kandy sports and took the side to the Clifford cup final. I was playing for the CR who were also in the final. Playing no 8 I had to mark Denzil who was the scrum half and play maker. Strange situation when you had to tackle your yesteryear's coach as hard as possible. Every time I managed to tackle him I said 'sorry sir'. That was the respect I had for him. CR finally won the cup 9-6 to win after a hard fought battle.

In 1982 it was his turn to ask me to coach. This time it was the Army side which won the Clifford cup that year. He thanked me for returning the favour after Army won the final.

There is a saying that it is not the number of years we live but the number of deeds you do that matter. His deeds on the rugby field, battle field and as a decent human being are too numerous to mention. He was truly a remarkable and impacting personality of the last century.

Respicere finem – Look to the end.

Ajith Abeyratne. T.C.K. / S.L. Rugby”



“A great warrior and a gentleman loved and respected and remembered by all who knew him.

Warna Etipola Imbuldeniya. Hillwood College / Cousin.”

“THIS IS MY PIECE ON DENZIL.

In the dictum of ‘Officer and a Gentleman’ there would not have been a better representation than the personality and character of Denzil. That we remember him fondly and vividly even decades after his passing as an inspiration and as an example for the generations that follow us, is the best memorial that we can erect. He was totally committed to whatever he was associated with: whether it was with Trinity, Rugby or the Battlegrounds. It was that same dedication whether he was in uniform or out of It. He was the same Denzil totally committed for the betterment of humanity, humble but purposeful.

No flash, no extravagance. He could move with kings and yet keep the common touch. And he touched the lives of those who knew him and knew of him with deep affection. Such illustrious persons are rare. And rarer still are those remembered decades after their passing.

Himendra Ranaweera. T.C.K. / Mercantile sector.”



“Sometimes it is very difficult to give true credence to a person’s greatness, his character and soul, especially when someone is a brilliant military commander, great leader, a brave soldier, a hero, a mentor and yet a friend and a simple human being. So, it is with the Late General Denzil Kobbekaduwa.

I think the quote below by Richard Watson Gilder – American Poet, Literary Editor and Civil War Union Soldier (1844-1909), truly and aptly reflects what the Late General stood for.

“Better than honor and glory, and History’s iron pen,
Was the thought of duty done and the love of his fellow-men.”

Col. (Retd) Gamini Balasuriya. S.L. Army.”

“DEAR SUNIL,

Thank you very much for sharing your well compiled article with me.

It brought back many memories of yesteryear when I had the privilege of working under Gen Denzil as a Brigade Commander., firstly in Mannar later in Op Balavegaya 2 and finally on the Jaffna Op in 1992, as the Artillery coordinator, which unfortunately was cancelled due to his tragic demise.

Apart from all that I got to know him in 1965 and kept in touch with him as a friend for whom I had the highest respect as a senior officer.

He was an exemplary leader the likes of whom we rarely see. Well respected and liked by both seniors and subordinates. Wish you all the very best in your endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

Gen. (Retd.) Srilal Weerasooriya. Former Commander S.L. Army.”



“Sri Lanka lost a genuine and pragmatic leader who would have led our motherland to the 21st century and out of the rut we are in today. Sri Lanka’s loss 26 years ago is felt much more today.

May we pragmatic and decent Sri Lankans fervently hope that a decent leader of the calibre of the late general, although a tough ask, be found amongst us Sri Lankans to lead us which is the urgent need of the hour at this critical moment our motherland is going through.

May this son of Lanka attain the eternal bliss of nirvana.

Thusitha Paranagama, Cousin presently living in Hong Kong.”

“An officer and a gentleman” a clichéd description I’ve heard/read time and time again, used to describe a remarkable man who to me, was and will always be, “Denzil Aiya.” When I think of him, the visual memory I have is not of a man in a uniform but a dear cousin with a charming smile, a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and an amazing sense of humor . . . one who very wittily explained that the difficulty he had in bending down to lace up his boots was simply due to his unusually large lungs!! Even though my memory fails me in recalling specific instances and anecdotes, the mere thought of him brings a smile to my face and evokes warm and endearing emotions within me, which I will always treasure. Denzil Aiya, thank you!

Fondly remembered by a cousin.”



“I am sending you my response. Hope it will suffice.
THE GENERAL DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA LEGACY.

In brief a 'Winning Army' - May 19th 2009 would not have been possible. if pathfinders of the caliber of Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Denis Perera and Vijaya Wimalaratne, had not constructed and enlightened the paths to victory over armed Tamil Militancy with their Action, Vision, Motivation and Patriotism. Some may wonder why Deshamanya Denis Perera has been mentioned as one of the architects of Victory as he did not win any battles or gallantry awards, because during his military career and as Commander of the Army, there were no serious conflicts although there were numerous upheavals in the country. Nevertheless, in his illustrious military career he set the pace in the spheres of military training and administration with the foresight to anticipate future requirements of a combat oriented fighting force capable of repulsing challenges posed to prevent the escalation of violence in the country.

Denzil was Sandhurst trained and had the unique honour of having been trained entirely in the United Kingdom. Except of course his basic military training stint at the Army Training Centre in Diyatalawa. Very early in his military career he proved to be a pragmatic, efficient and competent Staff Officer and Administrator. He distinguished himself as a brilliant instructor at the Military Academy in Diyatalawa. Denzil was a thorough professional who epitomized the classic image of an 'Officer and Gentleman'. In senior professional appointments he displayed the rare combination of a 'fighting and thinking' Leader. In combat operations Denzil almost always displayed his brilliance as a strategist and clever tactician. His courage on the battlefield was matched by his sense of fair play, upright behavior, morality and the courage to stand by his actions and of the subordinates he commanded. He was completely immersed in tasks delegated to him and the responsibilities he undertook on his own initiative- thinking and acting "out-of-the-box" which culminated in the desired results and the successes he achieved.

The feature of the tactics and strategies he adopted to cater to real life situations was his innovative skills, reacting to his "gut-feelings" and using his vast experience which translated into great success and high morale.

Denzil Kobbekaduwa was intimately involved in almost all major combat operations conducted against Tamil Militancy since 23rd. July 1983 ["Black Friday"]. Denzil planned and executed most, being 'up-front' with leading combat elements influencing the battle as great military leaders do, bearing the brunt.

Some of the more famous combat operations Denzil planned and executed are "Operation Liberation" Phase I - popularly known as the "Vadamarachchi Operation" of 1987. Operation "Thrividha Balaya" of July 1990 [A Tri-Forces Operation to relieve the siege on the Jaffna Fort, Operation "Sea-Breeze" of August 1990 [to relieve the siege on the Army complex in

Mullaitivu], and Operation "Balavegaya" of July 1991 [A Tri-Forces operation to relieve the siege on the Elephant Pass military complex] an Amphibious Operation. In my personal opinion "OP Balavegaya" was his crowning glory.

In an article to commemorate 20 years after the demise of this great Military Icon Professor Dr. Rajiva Wijesinha relates to the sterling qualities of General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, chiefly his concern towards "Winning the Hearts and Minds" approach in his dealings with the Civil population, regardless of caste, creed and ethnicity and the Professor insists that the 'Kobbekaduwan approach' is the answer tempered with ,more sympathy and sensitivity- rather than the alternative of hanging and flogging them, as some senior officers did. "Kobbekaduwa brought people together; he converted them into a community. He planted humanity in Hearts, and in those hearts that were humane he made generosity bloom. Kobbekaduwa had eyes that could see things that escaped most people". Professor Wijesinha concludes his article stating that, "The best way to honour General Denzil- the best Army Commander we never had- an inspiration to Civilians as well as to his Colleagues in the Army is to follow his examples.

Denzil was riding the crest of a wave in his military career and public life when tragedy struck at Araly Point in the Kayts Island on 8th. August 1992. The country and the military lost their most loved, accomplished and brilliant combat General, together with the most experienced and battle hardened Brigadier Vijaya Wimalaratne. The military was in shock, the country was in shock; victory over armed Tamil Militancy never seemed further away.

In conclusion, may I extoll the virtues proper to his state of life. He was mighty in strength and understanding. He was excellent in power, judgment and abundant justice. He did not oppress. He was open in his opinions and true. He always thought of others. He straddled the military and

public sphere like a Colossus with honour and majesty. He was diligent in his work, upright, honest and faithful to his profession. His behavior was modest, conversation kind and actions edifying. He was humble in success. Hardly anyone could fault him on professional competency, capability, personal integrity, diligence or courage. Prompted by a deep sense of national pride, his life and times will be unforgettable. We may never see the likes of another Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa ever again.

Gen. (Retd) Gerry de Silva. RWP VSV USP Former Commander S.L. Army.



“Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a charismatic leader. He had the unique ability to attract, motivate and gain the utmost confidence of the rank and file due to his personality, speech and actions.

He was a professional soldier, highly knowledgeable, intelligent, dedicated and very committed to his work. He was also a very sincere, simple and honest leader whose integrity was unquestionable.

One of the strongest facets of Lt. General Kobbekaduwa was his superior decision making ability, dependability and his ability to handle crises. He was a very good administrator and a man of action and was blessed with an abundance of courage, determination and perseverance to get things done. He was very much loved and respected by all Officers and Soldiers.

He was undoubtedly recognized as the one of the best and most capable Generals in the Army. He was a born leader, his efforts was solely dedicated to preserve the territorial integrity of Mother Lanka and to safeguard its people who he loved and cared for at all times.

Major General Gamini Hettiarchchi. S.L. Army.”

“I as an officer from the Corps of Signals had the privilege to work under Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa as a Staff officer at Army H.Q. and later as an Intelligence Officer at S.F.H.Q.in Gurunagar, Jaffna. He was a highly disciplined officer and always believed in fair play. For me he was an officer of high class and a gentleman.

Having worked with him for many years in a highly disciplined environment I was able to gain his confidence. As a result I was treated as a sincere friend and he associated with me like another member from his own family. Also I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa's beloved wife Mrs. Lali Kobbekaduwa who contributed and supported him to achieve greater heights within the Sri Lankan society & its Armed services.

I would like to wish Gen. Kobbekaduwa's children, Roshani, Shanilka & Dilshan all the best in their future endeavors.

May the blessings of the noble triple gem be with them in the future.

Maj. Gen. (Retd) A.M.C.W.B. Seneviratne. U S P. ndc. psc. / Former Chief of Staff. S.L. Army.”



“Denzil Kobbekaduwa an outstanding leader !! A great son of Sri-lanka & A True Military Leader, he led his forces from the front he was capable of COMMANDING the respect of all military forces including the common man of Sri- Lanka. The care he extended to them is no doubt greatly appreciated. He always ensured the safety and security of all people of our country - He Was a Classic Epitome of an Officer & a Gentleman.

His family, friends, and countryman consider him as The Most Respected Man Of The Last Century. May he attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.

Laleenie Paranagama Hulangamuwa. Cousin.”
Attorney At Law.

“DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA - APPRECIATION OF AN EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN BEING.

I got to know Denzil well during the time that he was courting my cousin Lali. My friendship and association with Denzil continued from that point on until his untimely demise.

To me, Denzil was an exemplary human being with exceptional human qualities, especially considering what he must have endured and experienced as a soldier and General on the war torn battle fields of the country, and the misery, death and destruction associated with war and violent armed conflicts.

Denzil was arguably the most exceptional military General that this country has had the good fortune to call its own. However, what struck me most about him was his kindness, humaneness and humility even in such emotionally trying circumstances and despite the success he achieved in the Sri Lanka Army and the genuine popularity he enjoyed amongst the people of this country, which was apparent from the large outpouring of grief expressed by men and women of all walks of life, who attended his funeral from every corner of Sri Lanka. His concern and care for civilians in the regions in which the armed conflict was ongoing, irrespective of their ethnicity, was a hallmark of his integrity as a military officer, and earned him the love and respect of those civilians. Although the enemy feared him as a brilliant military commander, strategist and tactician, they too respected him for the high standards of conduct he adhered to as a soldier and military commander. In my mind, Denzil was, and still continues to be, the epitome of an officer and gentleman.

When Denzil died, this country lost its greatest military General and a genuine war hero, but to me, we lost an exceptional human being that day. His loss is felt amongst his family, relatives and friends even to this day and he is remembered so fondly, primarily because of those wonderful qualities he possessed as a human being.

Lilamanie Ratwatte Sirimanne. Cousin.”

“TRIBUTE FROM TRINITY COLLEGE TORONTO O.B.A.

"Trinitians in Ontario join our brethren the world over in saluting one of the greatest Trinitians ever to walk this earth. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa will forever live in the memory of all Sri Lankans".



Shan Shanmuganathan.
Secretary
T.C.K. Toronto. O.B.A.”



“Denzil was my Senior Prefect & Captain of the Trinity College Rugby side, when I was in the 6th standard at T.C.K.

It encouraged me to take up Rugby in college after seeing him play for Trinity College

I came to closely associate with him after I left school. As scrum half's both of us opposed each other, Denzil playing for Kandy S.C. and myself playing for Havelock's S.C. and after these encounters he used to invite me home for dinner.



This taught me to be humble in victory and to face defeat and strive for success. Most of my opponents in the Rugby fraternity are now lifelong friends.

Denzil and I represented Sri Lanka Rugby as the 1st and the 2nd scrum half.

He was also one of the reasons for my joining the Army, because he gave stature to his size, by his performance in the field where he excelled very much better than people of bigger size.

After joining the Army I have fond memories of his associations.

He was also one of my rugby coaches along with Sena de Silva where we won the coveted Clifford Cup. Denzil and I have taken a photograph together in uniform to find out who is taller.



All these incidents go to show that he was dedicated to whatever task entrusted to him either in the sports field or in the battle field. He performed his task to the best of his ability setting an example to his seniors and subordinates, played the game or fought the battle straight. He was loved by his friends and foe alike. - (JAPANA J.)

Brig. (Retd.) J.P.A. Jayawardena. USP, MISMM.”



“LIEUTENANT GENERAL DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA.

It is indeed an honour to be given the opportunity to say a few words about my good friend Denzil – whom I knew from 1960. I was a Midshipman at the Britannia Royal College Dartmouth, and Denzil was a Cadet at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. Though not known at the beginning, he and I played Rugger against each other, S. Thomas v Trinity!

As Cadets at Dartmouth, and similarly for those at Sandhurst, whenever we come on our leave, we have to report to the Military Attaché, at the Ceylon High Commission, 13 Hyde Park Gardens, London, W2. It was at one of these occasions that I first met Denzil – and we’ve been very good friends ever since.

We used to usually spend our leave periods from our respective Colleges, Dartmouth/Sandhurst (which were usually at the same time) together, abroad, in the Continent. Memorable and happy were these occasions. And any time spent in London would usually be in the same cramped and crowded flat for which we paid 10 shillings a week – a large sum in those days!

From his early days, Denzil showed great qualities of Leadership and understanding and human kindness. He was simple and down to earth, and was well respected by all and sundry – who had occasion to meet him. He never bragged! In simple English, he was a brilliant Officer and Gentleman and a simple human being.

On completion of my training, we parted company, and I returned to Ceylon and Denzil continued his training at Sandhurst. On his return to Ceylon, he was posted to the Armoured Corps and we used to meet on and off either at the Navy Wardroom, (Officers Mess) Colombo, or in the Armoured Corps Officers Mess. Of course, we played against each other in the Army vs Navy Rugby Matches. Denzil was a brilliant Scrum Half!

Let me narrate an occasion on which he displayed his true gentlemanly qualities!

I was in the Naval & Maritime Academy, Trincomalee, training Cadets. During this period, we used to have several visits from batches of Cadets from the Army, to learn about Navy Cadet Training procedures. During one of these visits, lo and behold I saw Denzil with a group of Army Cadets at the Academy! I knew of the visit, but didn't know who was accompanying them. I went up to him and shouted 'Hi Denzil' and put my arm around him. He stepped back, saluted, and said Major Kobbekaduwa reporting Sir. I got the shock of my life! When no one was watching, I called him aside and told him 'Denzil cut the bullshit! What is this 'Sir' thing about? He then said, 'Sir, on duty you are senior to me and I will always call you Sir, on duty!'

That was Denzil – a thorough Officer and Gentleman. Of course, the whole country knows about his professional capabilities and his great deeds to see an end to the conflict – victoriously! He paid the supreme sacrifice!

Let me finally conclude by saying "I could never forget his charming smile"

May He Rest In peace.

Cdr. (G) C. B. H. Gooneratne. SLN (Retd)”



“A TRIBUTE TO LT. GEN. DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA
RWP RSP VSV USP
AN OFFICER AND GENTLEMEN PAR EXCELLENCE



I first met Gen Denzil Kobbekaduwa at the Officer Cadet School as the Chief Instructor when I was a subaltern officer instructor in 1978. He had just returned from Staff College in Camberley, UK. He was the perfect role model as an instructor and was much respected by the officer cadets, all instructors and even the civilians who associated him. He was always smart, punctual, cheerful, enthusiastic and very knowledgeable and experienced in the profession of arms. His character and disposition was impeccable as well as being an inspiring and helpful officer instructor to his students and instructors alike. He joined us in all activities from military studies, to games, to field exercises and extra-curricular activities which helped us to which mould the future officers of the Army. He was in much demand that he was suddenly taken to Jaffna to serve in Gen. T.I. Weeratunga's operational staff in 1979.

I next encountered him when I was a staff Captain in Jaffna in 1981, as a senior member of Gen. Weeratunga's operational staff stationed at Gurunagar. His many friends and school-mates from Trinity used to meet him and invite him to their homes. On one such occasion he asked me to accompany him to have breakfast with one of his Tamil classmates in Jaffna. Gen Denzil with his friendly demeanour was at home with his

friend and family who entertained us as part of the family. His kind and pleasing nature won him many friends in the North. Whilst returning to Palaly he asked me whether I was familiar with the road network and the surrounding areas of the Jaffna peninsula. When he realized I was not too familiar he asked me to study the map daily and try to understand how the main junctions on each arterial road leading to Jaffna town from Pt. Pedro, KKS, Karainagar, Chavakatchcheri and Sanguppiddi were located. Then he wanted me to look at the lateral roads and the surrounding townships/villages. In short he was helping me to understand the terrain of Jaffna which stood me in good stead when I was on Operation Riviresa in 1995.

Next I encountered him in 1983 after I returned from a Company Commanders Course in Malaysia. He invited me to conduct a lecture for the Armoured Corps on officer training day at the Rock House camp in Mutuwal. He was the Commanding Officer of the Armoured Corps and took great pains to train his officers and ensure they were exposed to the latest information from all possible sources to enable them to update their knowledge.

I met him on and off after that but it was his unstinted support and determination to save us from a besieged situation in Batticaloa in June 1990 that remains very vividly in my mind to-date. He as the Division Commander he was entrusted to send in reinforcements to relieve the besieged troops in 3 Detachments in the Batticaloa district. He was instrumental in first ensuring we survived to be relieved by constantly talking to us over the radio and encouraging us to fight it to the end. It was his exceptional and inspirational leadership that paved the way for a very successful relief operation that saved so many lives and raised the morale of the Army. It will always remain deeply ingrained in my mind and I will be ever so grateful to this great warrior General who will always be remembered with

respect and honour. He was able to muster the support of the Navy, Air Force and Police to execute every operation he undertook as one of the most charismatic and much loved Generals to serve mother Lanka.



Gen. Kobbekaduwa speaking to me after addressing troops of Gemunu Watch at Kallady after the siege in June 1990.

Finally in my opinion Gen Denzil Kobbekaduwa was one of our finest if not the best military Commander to serve the country. His humble beginnings, strong family background, a solid school career and his military training in the UK at Sandhurst, Camberley and Shrivenham made him an excellent leader and much respected officer in our Armed Forces. His understanding of the heartbeat of his men at all times and placing their welfare and interests before his, made him a much loved and charismatic leader.

As General Douglas MacArthur famously said "Duty, Honour, Country" in his farewell address to the cadets of West Point Military Academy, USA; Gen Denzil Kobbekaduwa lived by this credo during his military life which was cut short unfortunately by his untimely death in Kayts in the North, in August 1992.

May he attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana!

Brig. Hiran N. Halangode [retd] RWP RSP USP”

“I have had the privilege of working closely with the late General Kobbekaduwa when he was the Security Forces Commander in Wanni and subsequently at the Joint Operations Command in Colombo. During these periods I worked directly under him. In addition I have met him on many instances on North and East operational fields. As I saw Late Gen. Kobbekaduwa, was an outstanding leader whose life time principle was integrity of the highest order personifying exemplary moral courage to do what is needed and what is right, while being an officer and gentleman, par-excellence. It reflected to me that he viewed professionalism for an officer as not only knowing the job, but it also relates it to the discipline and decorum that he and his men maintain while engaged on the task whatever the circumstances may be.

When late General Kobbekaduwa was the Security Forces Commander Wanni, I was a young pilot in the rank of Flying Officer based at the Air Force Base Vavuniya. He was a role model for me as a young officer. There have been so many instances that I have had firsthand experience of his excellent Leadership and adorable human qualities.

When I was following my staff collage in USA I took him as a role model on the command and leadership module and discussed my experience working under him and his strong leadership traits in my class portfolio. I emulated his management approach of being firm, fair and friendly as I rose in my career with success. Further, I used to always admire him on how he looked after us as subordinates though I was from a different service.

I could also vividly remember the diligent efforts that he took to help the people in the border villages with his personal friends supporting them with their arduous lively hood.

The late General professed Integrity, professionalism and empathy as the

attributes that serve as the pillars of genuine officering at all times. He was a passionate leader, a visionary and a professional, whose life is worthy of celebration at the highest level of esteem and appreciation. I am quite confident that Sri Lankan military and the generations to come will add to his legacy.

May the Late Gen. Kobbekaduwa who was true patriotic be remembered by the future generation for his excellence in all aspects !

Air Chief Marshal Gagan Bulathsinghala. RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, M Phil (Def & Strat Stu), MSc (Def Stu) in Mgt, FIM (SL), ndc, psc. Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.”



**GEN. KOBBEKADUWA
TAKING CARE OF A WOUNDED SOLDIER**



***PIONEERS OF THE VIJAYABAHU
TRUST FUND THE LATE VEN. K. WIMALAGNANA
CHIEF PRIEST OF THANTIRIMALE RAJA MAHA VIHARAYA
& LT. GEN. DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA.***

“A TRIBUTE TO LT. GENERAL DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA

Gen. Kobbekaduwa was an upstanding officer who was held in high regard and respect, both by his fellow officers and soldiers. On the battle field, he led the troops from the front and ensured the security and welfare of the war victims of all communities and the troops.

I had the great privilege of closely associating with the late Gen. Kobbekaduwa when I took up appointment as D.I.G. North Central Range in 1990. At that time, he was the C.O. of the Northern Range of the Sri Lanka Army. There were many challenges; most crucial of which was the impact of the armed conflict on the communities in border villages. The villagers were vulnerable to many risks including the threats to their security.

This was a time when the conflict was at its worst. The Chief Incumbent of the Thanthirimale Raja Maha Viharaya at that time, Ven. Kudakongaskada Wimalagnana Thero, arranged a meeting at the Irattaperiyakulama

Vijayabahu Army Camp under the patronage of Gen Kobbekaduwa with the primary objective of discussing the rehabilitation and resettlement of communities affected by the war and uplifting their living standards.

Along with General, and the Chief Incumbent, late Mr. T. K. Dassanayake, late Mr. Nehru Gunatilleke P.C., Mr. G.A. Chandrasiri, Col. Anil Amarasekara, S.S.P. Ayupala, and a few other dedicated individuals were at that first meeting inside the Vijayabahu Army Camp. It would not be incorrect to say that the high regard all of us at that table had for Gen. Kobbekaduwa's leadership and integrity may have contributed in some way to our commitment to form the Vijayabahu Trust Fund.

Gen. Kobbekaduwa gave his fullest support to the Chief Incumbent, or Nayaka Thero, along with his troops at a time the region needed it the most.

In the year 1991, terrorists attacked the Katupotha Army Camp massacring 54 soldiers. The LTTE then set fire to the entire village after taking all the weapons from the camp. Gen. Kobbekaduwa ensured the remaining villagers were brought to the temple premises and given refuge and protection in temporary sheds with all possible amenities.

Developing the village infrastructure was a priority for Gen. Kobbekaduwa. He helped renovate and irrigate 64 tanks after building the Galkadawala anicut over Malwathu Oya, extending the distance over 4km canal up to Mahahalmillewa. Gen. Kobbekaduwa focused on facilitating normalcy and also enabling opportunities for these communities to continue their livelihoods.

He was instrumental in resettling the Tamil villagers in Veerapuram in the Vavuniya District. He built the Hindu Kovil, ensured their security and provided them with overhead water tanks and agricultural wells.

While resettling these villagers, he provided them with seed paddy, manure, weedicides and fuel in places like Kambiliyawetiya. He constructed the Kokmote anicut to irrigate 400 acres of land.

He provided drinking water, food and protection to many villages including Chettikulam, Gomarankadwala and other villages along the Mannar road.

He constructed 1,338 houses, 200 agriculture wells, 60 tube wells, 18 preschools, 998 toilets in the Thanthirimale, Alayapathgama, Manelwewa, Nikuwewa, Kalawelpothana, Kudagama, and a few other villages.

In Upatissagama, he resettled 186 families and constructed the preschool, school, community centre, cooperative store to mention a few services. Under his leadership, he built the bridge across Malwathu Oya. He renovated a further 30 small tanks in the Kokebe, Irikewa area.

Every year, he provided 5,000 coconut plants, seed onions to promote cultivations other than paddy and he supplied around 15,000 Kartha Kolomban plants. In addition, he supplied agricultural equipment, tractors, a few bullock carts with tyres and set up a grain purchasing centre at the temple.

He developed the Thanthirimale rural hospital, agricultural services centre, technical training centre and set up two army camps. He provided an ambulance, two jeeps and a van along with fuel.

He had the troops build underground bunkers to guard the civilians; there was a bunker line built in the Weli Oya area and another bunker line spanning 95-km to protect communities that were probably among the worst affected by the armed conflict.

He was instrumental in inviting the Maha Sangha from the South along with other well-wishers and donors to provide relief to the innocent war victims in the North.

UNICEF organization, South Asia Foundation, Sinhala Veera Vidahana, Sinhala Kanthabhivurdhi Sangamaya, Hela Sarana, YMBA, Kalutara Bodhi Trust, several more foreign aid organisations, Past Pupil's Associations of Visakha Vidyalaya, Ananda College, Nalanda College, Dharmaraja College were some of the organisations which helped Gen. Kobbekaduwa to fulfill the needs of the terror stricken villages and also support the Ven. Nayaka Thero to achieve his targets to strengthen and encourage the villagers to live their lives in their native lands.

I owe it to the present Chief Incumbent of the Thanthirimale Raja Maha Vihara, Ven. Thanthirimale Chandrarathana thero for providing me with the details of his innumerable services.

If not for the yeoman service rendered by Gen. Kobbekaduwa and if the Nayaka Thero was not supported in his worthy cause, the conditions in these areas could have deteriorated beyond repair. Many individuals and organisations came forward willingly to help Gen. Kobbekaduwa knowing his fearless and human nature and his innate disposition that touched people's hearts.

Gen. Kobbekaduwa arranged medical clinics in the areas affected by the war like Thanthirimale, and Polonnaruwa. Dr. Kapila Gunawardena, Dr. Kamani Mayadunne from the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa General Hospitals arranged for the doctors to serve voluntarily in these clinics. Medicine for these clinics were provided by Dr. Hiranthi Wijemanne from the UNICEF and Dr. Ajith Mendis from the government medical supplies.

With this good work, Gen. Kobbekaduwa also made sure that his troops willingly gave their services and ensured their welfare. During New Year, he would organize the Avurudu Sweet meats for the soldiers as they didn't get a chance to be home with their loved ones. General himself would visit all the bunkers and distribute the treats. This shows that he was a humane

chief who adopted soldier friendly policies. Even among the general public, he was held in high esteem as he treated all communities alike.

He himself led a very simple life, often visiting the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi. He stood strong on his values, be it to collect funds for the work of the Vijayabahu Trust Fund or his personal life. For all the projects he carried out, he gave specific instructions to his troops not to use unnecessary power to raise funds and not to collect any funds at road blocks.

He didn't focus on increasing wealth or assets. He maintained his policies at all times. His troops were led by example to use their power as military officers with restraint and discipline to serve the communities and he was a proponent to protect the temples, to maintain the natural environment in its pristine condition as much as possible and to respect and protect the assets of the Tamil civilians. General never focused on enhancing his own wealth; he strongly believed in the teachings of Lord Buddha and believed that good begets good and evil begets evil.

Present Chief Incumbent of the Thanthirimale Raja Maha Vihara, Ven. Thanthirimale Chandrarathana thero continues the development initiatives of the Late Chief Incumbent and Gen. Kobbekaduwa.

Every year, Gen. Kobbekaduwa's family and friends and the Kobbekaduwa Trust Fund conduct meritorious deeds by identifying needs in villages and providing valuable donations and dry rations in memory of this great leader. The present Chief Incumbent coordinates these projects to offer merits to this great war hero.

Late Gen. Kobbekaduwa was a pioneer of the development in Thanthirimale and ensuring the communities were self-sufficient. It is the sheer misfortune of the country that he had to face such a cruel end.

May he be blessed with the supreme bliss of Nirvana.

Gamini Randeni. Former D.I.G. Sri Lanka Police. & Mrs. Randeni.”

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අඩසඳ දැළි වළාවෙන් වැසිණි
 තුරුලතා නිසොල්මන්ය
 මනක බණ පද කියන මල් සුළඟ
 උතුරු බිම් මතින් නැග - දකුණට හමා ගියේය
 හුස්ම ගන්නා හැම හදවතක්ම සසල විය
 දුක්බර ඉකිබිදුම් හඬ
 පාඨ සෝබර රැය පුරා එකනින්නාද විය
 නොතු පියන් වැසුණු ඔබ සිරුර
 මළ හිරු බැස යන සැන්දෑවේ
 රුදුරු ගිණිදළු තර නොපෙනී ගියේය

ජාතියේ හදවත නතර විය.

මේ .. ඉන් වසර එකහමාරකට පසුවය
 ඔබ තවමත් වෙහි ජීවමානය
 මැතිණිය දරු තිදෙනා සමගින්
 ඔබ මනකය ද, සුවිඳ ද රැගෙන
 අද මෙහි පැමිණ ඇත
 ඔබ “රූපකය” අප මනසෙහි සිත්තම් වෙයි . . .
 “ඔබට නිවන් සුව ලැබේවා” !!
 ගුරු සමීදුන්ගේ සඳහම් හඬ
 අද සෝබර දුක් ගියත් වී ඇත්තේ
 ඔබතුමා, එතුමානන්ට දුක්වූ ලැදිකම නිසාය
 ඒ හඬ අසන්නට . . ඔබ අද මෙහි සිටිතැයි
 අපේ හදවත් නිහඩවම මුමුනයි

ශ්‍රී වාචිස්සර දහම් පාසැලේ ඇදුරු මඩුල්ල හා දරු පිරිය.



A group of ex-soldiers who were present at “ABIMANSALA” Anuradhapura to participate in a ceremony to remember Gen. Kobbekaduwa. 8th August 2018.

මා දුටු ජීවමාන දෙවියා සෛනික බෙහෙව් කොබ්බෑකඩුව

මට මෙතුමාව හමු වන්නේ 1982 පලාලි යුධ හමුදා කඳවුරේදී. එවකට හමුදා-පති ටී.අයි.වීරතුංග (තිස්ස ඉන්දික වීරතුංග මහතා) සමග රාජකාරී සඳහා සති 2 කට කඳවුරට පැමිණි මොහොතේදී. එදා මෙතුමා දුරුවේ කපිතාන් තනතුරයි. එදත් මෙතුමා හරි කඩිසරයි, හරි ලස්සනයි, හරි හොඳ මහත්මයෙක්. ප්‍රිය මනාප වචන කතා කරන විනය ගරුක, වෙලාවට වැඩ කරන, එඩිතර බවින් පිරුන හරි ලස්සන හිනාවකින් මුළු සරසා ගත් නිළධාරී මහත්මයෙක්. එදා මට හිතූනා කවදා හරි දවසක ශ්‍රී ලංකා යුධ හමුදාවේ හොඳ තැනක් ගන්නා බව.

ඉන් පසු වසර ගණනාවකට පස්සේ 1987/1988 වර්ෂයේදී පමණ මට මෙතුමාව අනුරාධපුර මූලස්ථාන කඳවුරේදී හමු වෙනවා. දවසක් මෙතුමා මාව දෑකලා ඇහුවා කොහොමද? කැමතිද මට ආපහු වැඩ කරන්න කියලා, මමත් එකපාරටම කැමතියි සර් කිව්වා. මගේ වැඩක් හරිම පිළිවෙලයි අවංකයි භාරදෙන රාජකාරියට කැප වෙලයි මම කරන්නේ. මම කරන්නේ සිවිල් කාර්යභාරයක්. මෙතුමා වගේ කෙනෙක් ලග වැඩ කරන්න ලැබෙන එක ඇත්තටම පෙර පිනක්, වාසනාවක්. ඒ මොකද දන්නවාද? මෙතුමාගේ

උසස් ගතිගුණ සහ මෙතුමාගෙන් අපේ ජීවිත වලට ඉගෙන ගන්න තිබෙන දේ අප්‍රමාණයි. කොපමණ මහත්සී වී වැඩ කළත් රාත්‍රී 12 ට නින්දට ගියත් උදේ 5 ට ගමනක් යන්න තියනවා නම් හරියටම වෙලාවට යනවා. මම තමයි මෙතුමාගේ ආහාර පාන සිවිල් කටයුතු ගැන සොයා බැලුවේ. මෙතුමා තම බිරිඳට දූ දරුවන්ට පමණක් නොවේ, හමුදාවේ අයටත්, සිවිල් ජනතාවටත් අසීමිතව ආදරේ කලා. ඒ අයගේ අයිතිවාසිකම් යුතුකම් හැම විටම සොයා බලා කටයුතු කළා. තමන් අදහන ආගමට ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේලාට අනෙකුත් ආගමික පූජක තුමන්ලාටද සුළු ජාතින්ටද ගෞරව කළා. මේ දේවල් මගේ හදවතට තදින්ම කා වැදුනා. අදත් මම එතුමාට විශේෂයෙන් ගෞරව කරනවා ඒවා මතක් වන විට. අනුරාධපුර නිළ නිවාසයේ සිටින කාලයේ හැමදාම උදේ සවස පහන් තියලා අනිවාර්යයෙන්ම බුදුන් වදිනවා. ඒ කාලයේ වන විට සර්ගේ මව ජීවිතයෙන් සමු අරන්. පියතුමා පමණයි ජීවතුන් අතර හිටියේ. බුදුන් වැදපු මල් වලින් කීපයක් අරගෙන මිය ගිය මවගේ පින්තූරයටද මල් ටිකක් හැමදාම පූජා කරනවා. මේක මගේ ජීවිතේ බෞද්ධ මිනිස්සු අතරේ දෑකපු අතිදුර්ලබ දෙයක්. මොන තරම් මවට ආදරේද කියලා එයින් පෙනවා. එතුමා තදින්ම දුක් වුන දවස දක්කේ තම පියා අසනීප වී කොළඹ රෝහලකට යන්න නිවාඩු පවා නොදීමට එවකට නපුරු වෛරයෙන් පිරුණු ඉහළ නිලධාරීන් කටයුතු කළා.

එදා තමයි මම සර්ගේ මුහුණේ දරාගන්න බැරි දුකක් දක්කේ බැස යන හිරු දිනා බලාගෙන හිටියා. මගේ හදවතටත් ඒ සිද්ධිය තදින්ම කා වැදුණා. මෙතුමා තිරිසන් සතුන්ට කොපමණ ආදරේද කියලා කියනවා නම් දවසක් අතරමං වී සිටිය සුනඛයෙක් ගෙනවිත් තිබුණා. මට ඇහුණා කාමරේ ලග පුංචි දරුවකුට කතා කරන හඬ. ගිහින් බලන විට මෙව්වර ආදරෙන් කතා කරලා තියෙන්නේ අර අහිංසක සුනඛයෙකුට. මෙතුමා ලග කවදාවත් ජාතිවාදය ආගම් වාදය තිබුණේ නැහැ. යුද්ධය දරුණු කාලයේ හමුදාවට අසු වුණු දෙමළ කොටි තරුණයෙක් ප්‍රශ්න කිරීම සඳහා මෙතුමාගේ කාර්යාලයට ඉදිරිපත් කලා. ඒ වන විට ඔහුගේ සිරුරේ සාමාන්‍ය තුවාල කීපයක්ම තිබුණා. මේක දෑකපු ගමන්ම සර් ප්‍රශ්න කිරීම පැත්තකට තබා ඔහු ගෙනා නිලධාරීන්ට කිවේ ඇයි මේ මනුෂ්‍යයාට බෙහෙත් දෑමීමේ නැත්තේ කියලා. ඉක්මනටම මෙඬිකල් කොපුල්වරයෙකුට බෙහෙත් රැගෙනවිත් බෙහෙත් දාන්න කියලා නියෝග කලා. ඒ අතරතුර නිලධාරීන්ට සවස් කාලයේ තේ පැන් රැගෙනවිත් තිබුණා. මෙතුමාගේ තේ කෝප්පයට තේ පිළියෙල කර සීනී මිශ්‍ර කරමින් තේ

එක හඳලා අර තුස්ත කරුණයට පිළිගැන්වූයේ අනිකුත් නිලධාරීන් සියලු දෙනා පුද්ගල කරවමින් සහ ආදර්ශයක් දෙමින්. මගේ සේවා කාලයේ කිසිම දවසක මේ වගේ දෙයක් දැකලාම නැහැ. සතුරන්ට උනත් ආදරය, කරුණාව දක්වූ එක් සිදුවීමක් ඒ. මට දෙමළ භාෂාව කතා කිරීමේ හැකියාව තියනවා. ඒ කාලයේ මම දුම්රියේ, බස් රථ වල යෑමේදී දෙමළ අය සමග මිත්‍රශීලීව කතා කරනවා. ඒ අය ද්‍රවිඩ භාෂාව කතා කරන අයට පුද්ගල ලෙන්ගතු කමක් දක්වන්නේ. එයාලගේ කතා වලදී මට පැවසුවේ ප්‍රභාකරන් උනත් එම සංවිධානයට උපදෙස් දීලා තිබුණලු ජෙනරල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව සටන් බිමේදී කොටු උනොත් ඝාතනය කරන්න එපා කියලා. ඊට හේතුව සර්ගේ ලග තිබුණ මනුස්සකම ගැන එම සංවිධානයට තොරතුරු ලැබිලා තිබෙන්නේ හමුදා අත්අඩංගුවෙන් මිදී පලා ගිය අයගෙන්මයි. ඔවුන් ප්‍රභාකරන්ට කීවලු එම සෙන්පතියා පුද්ගල කෙනෙක් කියලා. අපගේ කැම බීම බේත් සහ අනෙකුත් පහසුකම් ගැන නිතර සොයා බැලුවා කියලා. තවත් එක විශේෂ සිද්ධියක් සිදු වුණා.

එක දවසක් මම වෙට්ටිකුලම් විජයභාහු කඳවුරේ සේවය කළ දිනයක වෙට්ටිකුලම් ප්‍රදේශයේ තාවකාලික සරණාගත කඳවුරක් තිබුණා එදා මමත් එහි සිටිල් සේවා කටයුතු සඳහා ගියා. මෙතුමා දුප්පත් අහිංසක මිනිස්සුන්ට ජාති හේදයෙන් තොරව දක්වන්නේ පුද්ගල කරුණාවක්. තත්තිරිමලේ ප්‍රදේශයේ ජනතාව ගැනද නිතර සොයා බැලුවා. හැකි හැම වෙලාවකම එම නායක හැමුදුරුවන් හමු වෙන්න යනවා. අවශ්‍ය දේ සොයා බලනවා. සමාවන්න අර කතාව කියලා ඉන්නම්. ඉතිං අර දෙමළ සරණාගත කඳවුරේ පුංචි දරුවෙකු ලගට ගිහින් ඔහුව වඩා ගත්තා. මේ දරුවො හරිම දුර්වලයි. මෙයාලට අපිට දෙන්න බැරිද නෙස්ටමෝල්ට්, කිරිපිට්, මාමයිට් වගේ දෙයක්. කෝ කවුද ඉන්නේ කියලා දිසාපතිතුමා හා එම පළාතේ කාර්යභාර හමුදා නිලධාරී සහ වෙනත් සිවිල් නිලධාරීන් වෙත හැරි කතා කළා., එවිට එම නිලධාරීන් කීවා අපට ඔබතුමාගේ අනුමැතිය ලබා දෙන්න අප ඒ කටයුතු කරන්නම් සර් කියලා. මෙතුමා එම මොහොතේම අද වැඩේ හෙටට කල් දමන මිනිස්සු සිටින රටක දුන්නේ පුද්ගල ආදර්ශයක්.

ඒ මොහොතේම එතුමාගේ හමුදා කාර්යභාරය පවරන නිලධාරියාගේ ගයිල් කවරයෙන් කොලයක් අරගෙන ගයිල් එක අතේ තියාගෙන විනාඩි පහකින් ලිවුම ලියලා ඉක්මනටම අත්සන් කරලා දුන්නා ඉක්මනටම මේ දරුවන්ට

ඒවා ලබා දෙන්න කියලා. මෙතුමා වැඩිපුරම කතා කළේ ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාව ඒ උනත් දේශප්‍රේමී හෙළ සිංහල වීරයෙක්. හැදි ගැරප්පු වලට වහල් නොවුන සිංහල ගතිගුණවලට සංස්කෘතියට ගරු කරපු කෙනෙක්. එවකට ජනාධිපති ආර්.ප්‍රේමදාස මහත්මයාගේ කෑම මේසේ අසුන් ගත්තත් එතුමාගෙන් අවසර අරගෙන හරි සිංහල කමට ගරු කරමින් කෑම ටික කෑවේ අනිත්මයි. දවසක් විදේශීය සිවිල් කණ්ඩායමක් උතුරේ යුධ කටයුතු යන අතරේ සිවිල් කටයුතු ගැන සොයන්න පැමිණි එම කණ්ඩායමට දිවා ආහාරය සඳහා මෙතුමාගේ නිල නිවසට ආරාධනා කළා. ආහාර ගන්නා අතරතුරේ හැම වෙලාවේම අනිත් අයගේ අඩුපාඩු කමී ගැනමයි බලන්නේ. ඒ අයට හොඳින් සංග්‍රහ කරන්නමයි හිතන්නේ. යුද්ධයට වගේම කෑම ඉක්මනට ගන්න ඉංග්‍රීසි භාෂාව චතුර ලෙස කතා කරන්න කඩිසරව ඇවිදින්න පුදුම හැකියාවක් එතුමට තිබුණේ. ආහාර ගන්නා අතරදී ඉහල තැනකින් දුරකථන ඇමතුමක් ආවා. මම සර්ගෙ අසලට ඇවිත්, සර් කොළඹින් කෝල් එකක්, කීවා. ඉතිරි කෑම ටික අවසන් කරලා සමා වෙන්න කියලා නැගිටලා කෝල් එක ගන්න ගියා. ඒ අතරේ අර සිවිල් කණ්ඩායමේ සුදු නෝනා කෙනෙක් කෑම ටික භාගෙට තියාගෙන අත්දෙක කම්මුලේ තියාගෙන සර් යන දිහා පුදුමෙන් බලාගෙන හිටියා. තව සුදු නෝනා කෙනෙක් ඉංග්‍රීසියෙන් ඇහුවා ඇයි ඔයා කෑම කන්නේ නැද්ද කියලා. එයා එතකොට කියනවා මේ මනුෂ්‍යයා මාව පුදුම කරවනවා. මට හිතාගන්න බැරි තරම් හොඳට අපිට සංග්‍රහ කරනවා. He is talking like a machine gun ඒ විතරක් නෙවෙයි අපිට හැරෙන්නවත් බැරි තරම් වේගයෙන් කාලත් ඉවරයි කියලා සර්ගෙ පිගාන දෙසට අනිත් අයගේ අවධානය යොමු කළා. ඒ තමයි අපේ සර්ගෙ හැකියාව විදේශිකයින් පුදුම කළ පුංචි සිදුවීමක්.

මෙතුමා මුලු ලෝකයටම ප්‍රසිද්ධ හමුදා නිලධාරියෙක් හැටියට යුධ හමුදාව තුලත් සිවිල් ජනතාව වන දෙමළ, මුස්ලිම්, සිංහල ජනතාව අතරත් ත්‍රස්තවාදීන් අතරද හොඳ හිත දිනා ගත් ලෝකප්‍රකට ප්‍රසිද්ධ හමුදා නිලධාරියෙක් හැටියට ඉතිහාස ගත වන බව නම් මට සහතිකයි. ඒ කාලයේ ඊශ්වරයා කවුන්ට ඩවුන් කියලා විදේශීය සංගීත කණ්ඩායමක් ඉංග්‍රීසි ගීතයක්ද නිර්මාණය කළා. ඒ මෙතුමාගේ යුධ මෙහෙයුමකට එකතු කළ සටන් නාමයක්. ඉරණම යනුවෙන්ද සටහන් කර තිබුණා. එපමණක් නොවේ. අපේ සිංහල සංගීත කැසට් පටි පවා මෙතුමාගේ නමින්ම බෙද හැරියා. මට මේ

වෙලාවේ මගේ ආදරයට ගෞරවයට පාත්‍ර වූ ජාතික හික්ෂු පෙරමුණේ බෙංගමුවේ නාලක හිමියන් සිහි කරන්නම ඕන. උන් වහන්සේත් එම ගිත උපහාර වලට උදව් කළා. උන් වහන්සේ අපේ සර්ව පුද්‍රම ආදරයක් ගෞරවයක් දැක්වුවේ.

යුධ සටන් යන අතරේ හදිසියේ අනුරාධපුර පැමිණි විට මෙතරම් අධික වැඩ කටයුතු තිබුණත් මං ගැනත් අහනවා. කොහොමද පවුල් ජීවිතේ, බබාලා කී දෙනෙක් ඉන්නවද, මොනවද ප්‍රශ්න කියෙන්නේ, අම්මා තාත්තා ගැන හොයලා බලනවාද කියලා, මගේ අම්මා ඒ වන විට ටිකක් අසනීප බව කිව්වා විතරයි එවෙලේම මට රාජකාරියෙන් බැහැර වෙන්න කීවා. ඉහල නිළධාරියෙකුට ටෙලිෆෝන් කළා. අනුරාධපුර මහ රෝහලේ අදාල වෛද්‍යවරයාට ද කතා කළා. මේ මොහොතේම ගෙදර ගිහින් අම්මාව රෝහලට ගෙනියන්න හමුදා නිළධාරියෙක් සමග ගිලන් රථයක්ද දුන්නා. ඒ වෙලාවේ මට හොඳටම බැනුම් අහන්න සිද්ධ වුණා. අම්මට මෙව්වර අසනීප කියෙද්දි එතුමාට නොදන්නා සිටියාට. අදත් මගේ අම්මා ජීවතුන් අතර ඉන්නේ මෙතුමා එදා කළ උපකාරය නිසා. අම්මා සම්පූර්ණ සුවය ලැබුවා. මම ඒ ගැන අදත් පිං දෙනවා මෙතුමගේ වසර 26 ක ගුණ සැමරුම් වලදී මම පැත්තකට වී නිහඬව කඳුළු සලනවා. මම මෙතුමාව බලා ගත්තේ හරියට තාත්තා කොනක් දරුවෙක් බලා ගන්නවා වගේ. ඒ තරමටම මම මෙතුමට ආදරෙයි. මෙතුමාගේ ඝාතනය දරාගන්න බැරිව මම පසුව අසනීප වී මානසික රෝහලේද සිටියා. දැන් මම වෛද්‍ය උපදෙස් මත හිත හදාගෙන ජීවිතේ තේරුම් අරගෙන විශ්‍රාමිකව කාලය ගෙවනවා. හැබැයි මේ අපරාදය කරපු උන්ටනම් මගේ ශාපය වැදුණා. ඒ එදා මෙතුමාගේ දේහයට අවසන් ගෞරවය දක්වන වෙලාවේ දෙපා නමැද වැඳලා කීවේ මේ අපරාද කරුවන් සුනු විසුනු වෙලා යන්න කියලා. ඒක ඒ විදියටම සාපලනා.

එවකට රටේ ප්‍රසිද්ධ වූණේ ත්‍රස්තවාදීන් විසින් මෙතුමාව ඝාතනය කළා කියලා ඒ ගැන අපි කතා නොකර ඉමු. එතුමා දනගෙන හිටියා ඇතුලෙන්ම මෙතුමා ඝාතනය කරන බව. බුද්ධි අංශද ඒ බව දනුවත් කළ බව දවසක කතා බහෙන් තේරුණා. දවසක් මට කීවා මේ රටේ හුගක් මිනිස්සු මට ආදරෙයි ඒ නිසා සමහරු මට කෑම බීම එවනවා රස කැවිලි එවනවා මම නැති දවස් වලට එහෙම එව්වොත් ඒ අයගේ දුරකථන අංක ලියා ගන්න ඒ මොකද එයාලට මටම ස්තූති කරන්න ඕනෙ.

ආදරේ මිනිස්සු වගේම නපුරු මිනිස්සුත් ඉන්නවා. මම හිටියේ නැති දවසට ගේන කෑම වර්ග මම එනතුරු නියාගන්න ඕනෙ නැහැ. ඔයාලා කට්ටිය කන්න. හැබැයි ඊට පෙර කෑම චුට්ටක් සතෙකුට දීල ඒක උභය කනවද බලන්න. උභය නිරික්ෂණය කරන්න. වමනෙ දානවද, කලන්තේ දානවද බලලා හොඳින් ඉන්නවනම් පමනක් ඔයාලා කන්න. ඒ තමයි කවුරුහරි ඇතුලෙන් හෝ වසක් විෂක් දිලා හෝ එතුමාව සටන් බිමෙන් ඉවත් කරන්න සුදානමක් ඇති බව දැනුන නිසා. දවසක් මෙතුමා වේදනාවෙන් හින් අමාරුවෙන් මට කතා කළේ හිතන්න බැරි වෙලාවක. අර සුදු පාට සෙරමෝනියල් කිටි එක ලෑස්ති කරන්න කියන්න. මේ රටේ ඉන්නේ පුදුම නපුරු මිනිස්සු. උඩින් යන්න අවසර ඉල්ලුවාම වොපර් නැහැ කියනවා. මුහුදෙන් යන්න ඉල්ලුවාම නැව් නැහැ කියනවා බිමින් යන්නත් එපා කියනවා. ඒ තරමට හතුරෝ, එදා ඒ මොහොතේ තිබුණ දුක්බර මුහුණ අදත් මට මැවී පේනවා. මෙතුමා කුරා කුඹියෙකුටවත් වරදක් කරන කෙනෙක් නෙවේ. දවසක් නාන කාමරේ කුහුඹියෝ ගොඩක් පිරිලා හිටියා. ඒ වෙලාවේ ගමනක් යන්න හිටියේ. නාන්නත් ඕනෙ. හැබැයි නැවොත් මේ අහිංසක සතුන් දහස් ගාණක් මැරෙනවා. ඒ නිසා වෙනත් ස්ථානයකට ගිහිල්ලයි එදා මෙතුමා ඒ අවශ්‍යතාවය ඉටු කර ගත්තේ. මට කීවා අර නාන කාමරයේ කරාමෙ එහෙම අද දවසට අරින්න එපා කියලා. මම විපරම් කරාමයි දුක්කේ බිත්තර සමග කුහුඹියෝ දහස් ගාණක් සිටින බව. ඒ තමයි මෙතුමාගේ සත්ත්ව කරුණාව. අපි නම් වතුර බාල්දියක් ගහලා අපේ අවශ්‍යතාවය ඉටුකර ගන්නවා.

ඒ සිද්ධියෙන් පසුව මගේ ජීවිතයටත් ඒ සත්ත්ව කරුණාව හොඳ පුරුදු එකතු කර ගත්තා. තවත් ලියන්නට බොහෝ දේ ඇතත් කෙටියෙන් අවසන් කරන්නේ ඉඩ මදි වෙන නිසා. මෙතුමා දෙවියෙකු ලෙස සිටින බව නම් මට කිව හැකියි. ඒ තරමටම ගම්මාන වල මිනිස්සු එදත් අදත් පිං දෙනවා. අවසන් වශයෙන් කියන්න තියෙන්නේ මගේ ආදරණීය වීර සෙත්පතිතුමා දයාබර කරුණාවන්ත මිනිස්කමින් උතුරා ගිය මගේ ජීවමාන මා ඇදහූ දෙවියාණෙනි. කෝබිබැකඩුව ශ්‍රීමතාණෙනි, කිසිම ආත්මයක මෙවන් කුමන්ත්‍රණකාරී ඝාතනයකට හසු නොවේවායි හදවතින්ම ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමි.

කේ. එම්. රණසිංහ

(පුද්ගලික සහයක)



මිතු දූෂි අතීතය

ඓතිහාසික දකුණු පළාතේ මාතර දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ අකුරැස්ස අතුරලියේ ග්‍රාමයේ පදිංචි වල්ලිවල ගමගේ දියෙස් අප්පු පියාණන්ගේ හා අන්දරමානගේ හා අන්දරමානගේ ජසලින් නෝනා මෑණියන්ගේ දරුවන් 11 දෙනෙකුගෙන් යුත් පවුලේ 6 වන දරුවා ලෙස වර්ෂ 1955 ඉල් මස 23 වන දින දුන්කොරවුව නිවසේදී මෙලොව එළිය දුටු වල්ලිවල ගමගේ සෝබන තිස්ස ළමා වියෙන් පසු අධ්‍යාපන කටයුතු සඳහා මාතර අදරලිය මහා විද්‍යාලයට ඇතුළත්ව 3 වන වසර දක්වාත් අනතුරුව රත්නපුර දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ දිප්පිටිගල මහා විද්‍යාලයේ අධ්‍යාපන පොදු සහතික පත් සාමාන්‍ය පෙළ දක්වා අධ්‍යාපන කටයුතු කර සිය අධ්‍යාපන කටයුතු නිම කල ඔහු ඔහුගෙන් තම උපන් බිමට සේවය කිරීම සඳහා තෝරා ගත්තේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා යුද්ධ හමුදාවයි.

ඒ අනුව වර්ෂ 1976 මැයි මස 11 වන දින ආධුනික සෙබලෙකු ලෙස යුද්ධ හමුදාවට බැඳී දියතලාව ආධුනික හමුදා පාසලේ 52 වන පාඨමාලාව සාර්ථකව හදාරා විසිරී යමෙන් අනතුරුව 1 වන සන්නාහ සන්නද්ධ බලකායට ඇතුල්ව එම රෙජිමේන්තුව විසින් පැවත්වූ රියදුරු පාඨමාලා අංක 1 සාර්ථකව හදාරා ඉන් අනතුරුව පාඨමාලා සහ ප්‍රධාන උපදේශකව සිටි මේජර් ඩෙනසිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව විසින් ඔහු දක්ෂතා දැක්වූ රියදුරෙකු නිසාවෙන් ඔහුට යුද්ධ හමුදාවේ ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ නිලධාරීන්වරුන්ගේ පුද්ගලික රියදුරෙකු වශයෙන් රාජකාරී කිරීමට හැකියාව ලැබුනු අතර ප්‍රථමයෙන්ම ආරක්ෂක සේනා මූලස්ථානය බටහිර ප්‍රධාන මාණ්ඩලික 2 ලෙස කටයුතු කල මේජර් පී. ඒ. කරුණාතිලක ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ නිලධාරී හට රාජකාරී කල අතර ඉන් අනතුරුව යාපනය ගුරුනගර සම්භන්ධිකරණ කාර්යාලයට ඇතුළත්ව රාජකාරී ඉටුකල අතර එම ස්ථානයේ වත්මන් සම්භන්ධිකරණ නිලධාරී ලෙස සතුමිනි ලුතිනන් කර්නල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ නිලධාරියාගේ පුද්ගලික රියදුරෙකු ලෙස සේවය කිරීමට අවස්ථාව උදා වූ අතර ඉන් අනතුරුව එතුමන් මියයන තුරුම වසර 11 කට ආසන්න කාලයක් රාජකාරී කල අතර එතුමන් මියගිය පසු එතුමන් විශ්‍රාම යාමට නියමිත දිනයට වර්ෂ

1995 ජූලි 27 දක්වා සිය ආර්භාවට රාජකාරී ඉටුකර ඉන් අනතුරුව වර්ෂ 1995 දී රාජකාරී කිරීම සඳහා දකුණු පළාතේ ප්‍රාදේශීය මූලස්ථානය වන ගාල්ලේ බ්‍රිස්ස දොරටුවට ඇතුළත්ව රාජකාරී ඉටුකර වර්ෂ 1998 නොවැම්බර් මස 22 වන දින වසර 22ක කාලය සම්පූර්ණ කර යුධ හමුදාවෙන් විශ්‍රාම ලබාගත් පසු ඔහු ලදී කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිනිය මගින් ලංකා ඛනිජ තෙල් නීතිගත සංස්ථාවේ රාජකාරියක් ලබාගත් අතර වසර 15 කට ආසන්න කාලයක් එහි රාජකාරී කර විශ්‍රාම ලබා ඇත.

දැනට ඔහු වීර ඩෙන්සිල් කෙබ්බෑකඩුව පදනමේ කටයුතු සඳහා සිය දායකත්වය ලබා දෙයි. ජීවිතයෙන් සමුගත් ජනතාවගේ ජෙනරාල් වරයා ලෙසින් හඳුන්වන ජෙනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කෙබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිතුමා ආදරයෙන් හා හක්කියෙන් නිතර සිහිපත් කරන ඔහු එතුමන්ට උතුම් වූ නිර්වානය ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමි.

ඩබ්ලිව්. ඩී. සෝබන තිස්ස
(Warrant Officer - 2 (Retd.))



Left to Right

Lt Col Vipul Botejue CO 1 GW, Lt Col Sarath Jayawardena Staff Officer of TF 1,
Col. Vijaya Wimalaratne Comd 1 Brigade,
Brig. Denzil Kobbekaduwa TF 1 Comd, Maj Gotabaya Rajapaksa CO 1 GR.

“ යුද හමුදා ඉතිහාසයේ ජෙනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිතුමා ජනතාව දුටුවේ යුදපීඨයේ දී පොඩි දුටුගැමුණු හැටියටය. එහෙත් එතුමා 1983, 84, 85 යන වර්ෂ වලදී 1 වන විමර්ශන රෙජිමේන්තුව සන්නද්ධ බලකායේ අණ දෙන නිලධාරී වශයෙන් රාජකාරී කිරීමේ දී සාමාන්‍ය සෙබලාට සැලකුවේ තමාගේ දරුවන් හා සමානය. ජෙනරාල් තුමා ගැන කීමට ගොඩාක් විස්තර ඇත. එයින් කොටසක් මා සිහිපත් කරමි.

සෙ/9154 බලලත් නිලධාරී 2 වන සෝබනතිස්ස W. G. වන මා 1983, 84, 85 යන කාලයේදී ජෙනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මහතාගේ යුදහමුදා පුද්ගලික රියදුරු වශයෙන් සේවය කරන කාලයේදී ගම් උදා සංකල්පය යටතේ ගෙවල් සාදා ජනතාවට දෙන ලදි. එහිදී 1 වන විමර්ශන සන්නාහ සන්නද්ධ බලකායේ සේවා වනිතා ඒකකයේ ගරු සභාපතිනී ලලි කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිනියයි. එම මැතිනියගේ විශේෂ දක්ෂතාවය මත නිවාස අධිකාරියේ සභාපති මහතා හමුවී නිට්ටඹුව රත්පොකුණගම උදාගම්මානයේ ගෙවල් විසි ගණනක් ලබා ගන්නා (එක් ගෙයක වටිනාකම රුපියල් ලක්ෂ 4.5 ක් පමණ වටී) එම ගෙයක් තට්ටු දෙකේ ලොකු ගෙවල්ය. එම ගෙවල් කොමාන්ඩෝ බලකායට සහ සන්නාහ සන්නද්ධ බලකායට හිමි විය. ඉන් එක් ගෙයක් මා සමඟ ජෙනරාල් තුමාට වැඩ කළ රියදුරු කෝපුල් කොතලාවලට හිමිවිය. එම ගෙයට මූලික ගෙවීම වශයෙන් රුපියල් 37,500 ක් ගෙවිය යුතුය. කෝපුල් කොතලාවලට ලැබුණු ගෙයට රුපියල් 37,500 ගෙවීමට නොහැකි වී අසරණ වී සිටින අවස්ථාවේ ජෙනරාල්තුමාට කියා සිටියා ගෙට බදින මුදල් නොමැති බව. එවිට ජෙනරාල්තුමා මට කීවා උදේ කෑම කා දෙදෙනාම මා හමුවන්න කියා.

අප දෙදෙනා ගොස් ජෙනරාල්තුමා හමුවුනා. එහිදී එතුමා කීවා ගෙදර ගොස් මැඩම් හමුවන්න. මැඩම් මුදල් දෙයි. එය රැගෙන ගොස් නිවාස අධිකාරියට බඳින්න කියා අප දෙදෙනා ගෙදර ගොස් මැඩම් හමුවුනා. එහිදී මැඩම් රුපියල් 37,500 ක් කොතලාවලට දුන්නා, දැන් ගිහින් නිවාස අධිකාරියට බඳින්න කියා. එම කාලයේ රුපියල් 37,500 ක් අද කාලයේ හැටියට ලක්ෂ 37,500 ක් තරම් වටිනවා. එක කුසේ උපන් සහෝදරයෙක් වත් නොකරන දෙයක් සෙබලාට කර පිහිට වීම ගැන ඉතා ආදරයෙන් සිහිපත් කරමි. එම මුදල අවුරුද්දකට විතර පසු මගේ බල කිරීමට මත මැඩම්ට ලබා දුනිමි.

ජෙනරාල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිතුමා වගේම ඔහුගේ ආදරණීය බිරිඳ ලලි කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිනිය ඉතා කරුණාවෙන් පිරුණු හදවතක් ඇති එඩිතර කාන්තාවක් වශයෙන් සඳහන් කළ හැක. එම මැතිනිය 1992 අගෝස්තු 08 වනදා සිට නොකඩවා අනුරාධපුර තන්තිරිමලේ අසරණ පවුල් 25-30 කට අංග සම්පූර්ණ වියලි සලාක සහ ගෘහ භාණ්ඩ ලබාදෙයි. මෙම බඩු ටික රැගෙන යාමට අත් ට්‍රැක්ටරයක් අවශ්‍ය වේ. ඒ වාගේම ජෙනරාල්තුමාගේ ප්‍රතිමාව ලඟ පුෂ්පෝපභාර කර ලංකාරාමයට අංග සම්පූර්ණ දානය පිරිනමයි. ඒ වාගේම ආබාධිත සෙබලුන් අමතක නොකරයි. අනුරාධපුර අභංජොලට ගොස් ඔහුට තෑගි හෝග දී තාමත් දුක සැප සොයයි.

එහෙත් මෙම 2018 අගෝස්තු 08 වන දින වෙනසක් වශයෙන් තන්තිරිමලේට වියලි සලාක නොදී හොඳ වැඩක් කරන ලදී. ගජබා රෙජිමේන්තුවේ අබාධිත සෙබලෙකුට අනුරාධපුර තඹුත්තේගම ගෙයක් සාදා එම සෙබලාට බාරදෙන ලදී. මැඩම් ජෙනරාල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව පදනමෙන් ආබාධිත සෙබලුන්ට අත් පා ලබා දී දුක සැප සොයයි. මෙයට පෙරද කොබ්බෑකඩුව පදනමෙන් ගෙවල් සාදා ආබාධිත සෙබලුන්ට ලබාදී ඇත. ජෙනරාල්තුමා දූයෙන් සමුගෙන 2018 අගෝස්තු 08 වන දිනට අවුරුදු 26ක් වෙනවා. ජෙනරාල්තුමාගේ පිංකම් මාලා කිසිවක් අඩු නොමැතිව කිරීම හා ආබාධිත සෙබලා අමතක නොවූ එකම නීතිගරුක, නිර්භීත කාන්තාවක් හැටියට මැඩම් හැඳින්විය හැක. මැඩම් මට බණිප තෙල් නීතිගත සංස්ථාවේ රැකියාවක් ලබාදුනි. මා දැන් එයින් විශ්‍රාම ගොස් ගෙදර සිටී. මගේ දුක සැප තවම සොයා බලයි. මගේ ඥාතීන්ගේ දරුවන්ට පවා රැකියා ලබාදී ඇත.

අවසන් වශයෙන් මා පතන්නේ ජෙනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව තුමා අප ලක් දෙරණේ බිහි වන්නයි කියා. ජෙනරාල් වගේ කෙනෙක් ශ්‍රී ලංකා යුද හමුදාවේ බිහි නොවන අතර ජෙනරාල් ඩෙන්සිල් කොබ්බෑකඩුව මැතිතුමාට නිවන්සුව ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමි.

ඩබ්ලිව්. ඩී. සෝබන තිස්ස
Warrant Officer – 2 (Retd.)





***Statues of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa
constructed by
the general public to show their appreciation for the
services rendered by him to Sri Lanka
as a statesman and a war hero.***



**The statue of Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa
in Anuradhapura.**

As the most respected person of the last century Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was known as the Peoples General public of Sri Lanka Also within the security forces he was categorized as the most knowledgeable Battle Commander. With the demise of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa on the 8th 0t August 1992 the general public of Sri Lanka to show their gratitude to this great personality commenced to build statues & memorial monuments within Sri Lanka. The first Statue of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa was built by the people of Vavunia in the Northern

Province of Sri Lanka. Since then statues of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa have come up in Nittambuwa (Western Province), Ahungalla (Southern Province), Kamburupitiya (Southern Province), Embilipitiya (Sabaragamuwa Province), Katugastota (Central Province), Katunayake (Western Province) Anuradhapura (North Central Province), Ampara (Eastern Province), Panadura (Western Province), Hali Ella (Uva Province), Galenbindunwewa (North Central Province) and Kandy (Central Province).

It must be mentioned that all these statues have been built with the voluntary contributions received from the general public in the respective areas and not with any political funding. This is an indication to what extent he was able to win the respect of all Sri Lankans in our motherland.



**The 26th death anniversary Commemoration Ceremony
8th August 2018 in Anuradhapura.**



The statue of Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa in Kandy.

THE MEMORIAL MONUMENT AT ARALY POINT IN KAYTS JAFFNA.

Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was killed on 8th August 1992 along with fellow-military veterans, Major General Wijaya Wimalarathne, Rear Admiral Mohan Jayamaha, Lieutenant Colonel H.R Stephen, Lieutenant Colonel G. H. Ariyaratne, Lieutenant Colonel Y N Palipana, Commander Asanga Lankathilaka, Lieutenant Colonel Nalin de Alwis, Lieutenant Commander C. B. Wijepura and the soldier Private W. J. Wickremasinghe while they were on a military assignment in Araly Point in Kayts, Jaffna.



**The Memorial Monument in memory of
the ten Security force personnel including Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa
who were killed on 8th of August 1992 at Araly Point in Jaffna.**

This Monument is maintained by the security forces.

APPRECIATION TO THE MOST RESPECTED PERSON OF THE LAST CENTURY.



For The S.L. Army - Most Knowledgeable Battle Commander.

For The General Public - Peoples General.

General Denzil Lakshman Kobbekaduwa. RWP. RSP. VSV. USP. psc. rcds.

Born in Kandy Sri Lanka (Ceylon) 27th July 1940.

Though a devout Buddhist, he respected and valued other religions and commanded the respect of all religious leaders.

Primary Education at Hillwood College & Trinity College Kandy. Senior Prefect, Rugby Captain & a rugby Lion, Hockey Vice-Captain & a Colours man .1st xi Cricketer

Profession. Officer in the Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Army. / Sportsman

Academic Studies at Ceylon Army Training Centre Diyatalawa, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Technical Transport/ Young Officers Course for Armoured Corps Officers in Bovington, Staff College Camberley & Royal College of Defence Studies Staff College England all in the United Kingdom.

Died on 8th August 1992 around 3.30 P.M. due to injuries sustained in a bomb blast that occurred around 9.30 A.M. at Aralay Point in Kayts Jaffna.

“ I do not want to compare the leaders Sri Lanka had during the last four decades with General Denzil Kobbekaduwa because he was a true military commander who was able to command the respect (not demand) of the Tri Forces due to the soldier friendly policy adopted by him - Led from the front, Respected his fellow officers, Subordinate & the care he showed to the Soldiers who worked with him in the office or in the battle front. He also moved round with the general public Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Burgers or any other community. He was a person who did not give false promises to the soldiers or to the public and

always worked to ensure the safety of the people specially during the war days. He led from the front to ensure the security of all people living in the border villages and it was not only Sinhala villages but of Tamil & Muslim villages as well. As a result he was an extremely popular and a respected person among the people of Sri Lanka & known as the Peoples General.

Dr. Janaka Goonethilake Consultant Obstetrician & Gynecologist / Researcher / Historian & Author describes General Denzil Kobbekaduwa as a true descendent of the great Meegastenna Adigar one of the bravest, compassionate and most loved Disava of the Kandyan Kingdom. There are no more words to describe him.

Therefore I will give a brief description of these great personalities who lived in Lanka (Sri Lanka). As per records of Laurie s Gazetteer two centuries ago there was a person called Dumbara Rajakaruna Seneviratne Abeykoon Mudaliya who held high office in the Kandyan kingdom and was extremely faithful & close to the king. He fought a battle against the Dutch and defeated the invading forces. Hence the king rewarded him with property in the in the Dumbara Valley of the Kandyan Kingdom. This Dumbara Rajakaruna Seneviratne Abeykoon Mudaliya had two sons namely Meegastenne Adigar Snr. & Megastenne Adigar Jnr. These two Adigars did not have sons to succeed them and the daughter who married a Ratwatte Adigar inherited the Dumbara Property to his fold.

Denzil Kobbekaduwa spent his childhood at Amunugama Walauwa in Gunnepana village which happens to be in the Dumbara valley. This property was originally owned by Dumbara Rajakaruna Seneviratne Abeykoon Mudaliya followed by Meegastenne Adigars. There is a story among the Buddhists who believe in rebirth, that Meegastenne Adigar was reborn as Denzil Kobbekaduwa who happened to be a great military commander & a true leader.

Therefore I wish to mention that the during 52 years you lived in Sri Lanka you developed an untarnished image for yourself and brought recognition to the country, Your Alma Mater, your Family, Parents and to your ancestors of Meegastenne dynasty. Your name will be written in the history books & your untarnished image will go on for generations in the future Sri Lanka.

On the 27th July 2018 will be your 78th birth anniversary. On the 8th of August 2018 it will be 26 years of your demise, and as a result your immediate family lost a great deal of support & guidance to which they were entitled to. Your untimely demise resulted in the nation losing the most respected person of the last century, The Security forces losing a great battle commander, Your inner circle of friends & relations losing their role model, Your Alma mater Trinity College Kandy lost a person who was always respected as a true Trinitian supporting in the field of sport. & Sri Lanka Rugby lost a great sports administrator.

Your family conducted religious ceremonies continuously for the past 26 years to bestow the merits of the Triple Gem and will continue do so in the future too.. Also in association with the family other religious leaders too have invoked their blessings on you. As a Buddhist I believe that you have inherited a Deva Athma and you had the strength to provide guidance to the Sri Lankan security forces to end the war.

This year too your family has arranged for religious ceremonies & remembrance services to bestow merit on you and to remember you. It is noteworthy to mention that last year after the ceremonies were concluded in Thantirimale & Anuradhapura the four month old drought came to an end on both days with heavy rains that were experienced in the drought stricken areas of the north central province. Was this a coincidence or a special blessing?

At this moment of time, after 26 years of your demise it must be mentioned that you were not a person who was willing to betray the Sri Lankan Security forces. For example 600 police officers were betrayed by the leadership of the nation by asking them to surrender to the L.T.T.E. They were all killed by the terrorists. But knowing you so well I can proudly mention that, if a similar surrender request was made to the Army you will be the first person to turn down a request of that nature even if it comes from the top leadership. Your strategy was to fight till the last bell calls. Your School motto.-"Respecefinem" - "Look to the end".

As a person who associated with you from my childhood I would like to make some comments that were shared among us which never came to the public domain.

At Trinity College you excelled in studies & sports and was appointed as the Head Prefect. You were in line to get more prestigious awards from the best school of all for your excellence. However your keenness to join the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Army you left Trinity College mid-year and gave up hopes of winning many more awards.

Certain politicians were extremely scared and feared you most. In the latter part of 1960 s you were penalized and sent on compulsory leave from the Army for chasing the politicians underworld henchman in the Mattakkuliya area and since you were able to command the respect of the then military leadership. But you had the courage to overcome this issue and get back to the Army after 3 years.

In the late 1970 s you were holding a post in the operations headquarters and the then political establishment moved you out to Diyatalawa Army training school.

During the July 1983 communal riots you wanted to control the problems at the inception itself but it did not happen. Hence you were once again transferred from Army H.Q. to Taffi H.Q. in Jaffna.

The most frustrating year was in 1987 when the then political establishment knelt down to so called big brother India and betrayed the nation and stalled the Vadamaracchi Operation. I can remember how annoyed you were and at a children's birthday party someone mentioned to you that if the politicians are not doing their job the Army should take over the country. Your instant answer was officers of the then Sri Lanka Army are not capable to rule a four decade old democratic nation. Also you did mention that if some officer opted to do so he will end up in disaster and get disgraced, Then came another debacle in 1989 when the top brass of the S.L Army nominated you to attend a prestigious course at the Royal College of Defence studies in England U.K. After a month of following the course in U.K. the political establishment in Sri Lanka wanted you back to counter the 1989 J.V.P. insurrection. I did remember you back in Sri Lanka making plans to counter the insurrection. However due the pressure exerted by the British defense authorities you were released by the Sri Lankan authorities to attend the course in the U.K.

We as Buddhists know even Lord Buddha had certain people like Deva Dattha & Chinchimanavika who wanted to disgrace Lord Buddha. Similarly there were some bad eggs who wanted to disgrace one of the most respected battle commanders Sri Lanka had at that time. They even went into the extent of leaking out battle plans to the media before the operations were carried out The general publics of Sri Lanka are entitled to make their own impressions of this great person. The conspirators who planned the bomb blast are still not identified & still a secret. Only the Gods above know who the real culprits are?

You were the most respected person of the last century and this year we are in the process of collecting short tributes to compile a note book to be handed over to your family, Grandchildren, Trinity College Archives and Defence establishment libraries so that it will be reading material for future leaders of Sri Lanka.

The sentiments expressed by distinguish personalities in the present day society are included in the note book dedicated to you. All these tributes comes after 26 long years after your demise.

Finally I have to mention that all good things come to an end. However your name will be in the hearts of the people of Sri Lanka as the Peoples General. We as Buddhist believes in Karma. All the good deeds carried out by any one will reap the benefits during our journey in Sansara. It will be the opposite for people who get carried away by doing wrong things, Every action has a reaction. We all know as to how you lived a simple life. As a close associate of you I know that on the fatal day your bank account balance may have been less than Rs. 1000/=. But you were able to carry a lot of Pin (blessings) to your next birth.

May I take this opportunity to say a big thank you for all the guidance given to me since I considered you as my role model.

May your journey in Sansara be a pleasant one till you achieve Nirvana.

Sunil Keppetipola.”
8th August 2018.



**“GENERAL DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA.
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
(AUGUST 11, 2012)**

It is hard to imagine that 20 years have passed since General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, along with some of his senior commanders, fell victim to a buried explosive device in the Jaffna Peninsula. That fateful day was August 8, 1992. The incident shook the nation to its core and plummeted military morale to the lowest ever in nearly a decade of conflict. It seems like the other day that the shocking tragedy befell the nation. The unfortunate war is now over, but the loss of a gentleman warrior lingers in our memories.

General Denzil, as he was respectfully and adorably known among the rank and file, was a man who conducted the difficult business of war fighting in an exemplary manner. Some argue that war is institutionalized violence. General Denzil did not see war that way. He did not promote war, but when driven to it, he fought with determination making sure that his troops respected the rules of warfare. It was common knowledge that even the adversary respected him for his humaneness. He did not conduct military operations with a feeling of vengeance. He waged war to achieve peace. The destruction, and the agony of non-combatants caught in the conflict devastated him. He often spoke of the day when the war would be over and all communities could live happily in a reconciled Sri Lanka. His often quoted saying "Let's not leave this to the next generation" is a reflection on how much he yearned for peace. Sadly though, he never lived to see the dawn of peace.



Former *The Island* photographer K. D. S. Gunasekera captured Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa in the Ampara District at the onset of Eelam war II

General Denzil possessed a mystifying aura of attraction. He drew respect and affection from the civil population particularly in areas affected by the conflict. When he was Commander North during 1990, he regularly visited remote villages under threat. Some of them were situated deep in the jungle on the fringes of hostile activity and were accessible through narrow jungle tracks. Despite the threat of land mines and ambushes he traveled to the furthest remote village to assess security and speak to the people. Such visits posed a security nightmare for his protection squads. When the jeep could not make it, he walked for miles along jungle tracks to meet the people.

It was deeply moving to see the response of the people. Men, women and children swarmed around him and touched him with great affection and some went prone to worship him. Gen Denzil was overwhelmed by their plight. He distributed clothes and food that he often carried during visits. The poor people in their own humble way offered whatever they had, and the General warmly accepted their hospitality. It was always a drama during the return journey. Message had spread rapidly around villages that General Kobbekaduwa had traveled towards the interior. As there was a single route to return, we had no choice but to take the same road back despite the risk.

People had gathered by the road-side near little hamlets and waited for the General. Few sweets and soft drinks were neatly laid on not so clean tables. The General always stopped and spent some time with the people. He patiently listened to their fears and anxieties and assured them of security and protection which was the primary concern. He discussed other issues like health and schooling for the children which he diligently followed up with government authorities upon returning to headquarters. He became deeply emotional during such visits and continued talking to villagers often forgetting the time of the day. He had to be gently reminded about the long trek back and the need to get out of high risk areas before dark. The people's plight may have had a profound impact, and he kept silent during the return trip. Barring the odd question he threw at me while I drove the jeep, he remained pensive.

General Denzil's love for the fighting soldier was phenomenal. The famous picture of the General holding a saline bottle of a wounded soldier being evacuated by helicopter bears testimony to his feelings for fighting men. The sheer pain and agony on his face was clearly visible. For him, Soldier safety, welfare and comfort came first, always and every time –his safety and welfare came last. "Your men" was the often quoted phrase whenever he addressed his subordinate commanders. I vividly recall an incident when battle tanks were first used in combat. Following an intense and long day of fighting in scorching heat, he watched tank crews collapsing due to heat exhaustion and dehydration. Tanks are tough stuff to fight with. Next day, by noon tank crews were provided with enhanced liquid nourishment. In the midst of a logistics nightmare of sustaining hundreds of troops in battle, I did not know how on earth high energy nutritional supplements arrived on the sand dunes of Elephant Pass.

Battle fatigue hits every soldier in combat, more so on senior commanders. On bad days it becomes worse. Even during intense combat, General Denzil never failed to provide words of comfort and encouragement to soldiers. A few kind words, accompanied by the usual smile on his battle fatigued face became oxygen for men in combat. His appearance on the front, and the commanding voice heard over radio transmissions provided great strength and confidence to soldiers. On the battle field, or in the operations room, burst of anger was not uncommon. Triggered by professional deeds or mis-deeds, it struck upon the victim like tropic thunder, but simply vanished within a few seconds. Never ever did one hear profanity during such moments – a very rare quality among men in uniform.

Soldiering under him was challenging, but not disappointing. He was a gentleman warrior and a wonderful comrade in arms. It was a privilege to have served under him. Above all, General Denzil was a shining example of a fine human being. He is gone, but not forgotten.

May He Attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.

Brigadier (Ret) Sri Mudannayake.”

**“TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF A
FRIEND AND A HERO,
LIEUTENANT GENERAL
DENZIL L. KOBBEKADUWA
AUG - 8 - 2012**



Denzil was born in Kandy on 27th July, 1940 to Loku Bandara & Iona Ratwatte Kobbekaduwa as their second child. He grew up in Kandy at Deldeniya Walauwa (Paternal Residence) of Deldeniya village in Menikdiwela, Kadugannawa and Amunugama Walauwa (Maternal Residence) of Amunugama village close to Kandy. These areas were close to the Kadugannawa Hills & the Dumbara Valley surrounded by the Mahaweli River with unspoilt environment close to nature where he was brought up by his parents.

Denzil had his nursery education at Hillwood College, Kandy which happens to be the sister School of Trinity College. In 1948 he was admitted to Trinity College Kandy and started his educational activities. It is on record that Denzil excelled in his studies and sports from his early days at Trinity College. As a student he was able to make steady progress in his

studies and also develop his leadership qualities and was a role model to many others in School, the society in Kandy and among his close family associates. As a person who had the privilege to associate with him from my childhood days, we, the close cousins of General Denzil Kobbekaduwa always looked upon him as a hero and a role model to all of us. He was our savior at times when we were in trouble among our closely knit families in Kandy.

When it came to his peak schooling days at Trinity College he was able to successfully complete the G.C.E. (O.L.) examination and the H.S.C examination (University Entrance examination). His performance in the field of sports was excellent as he represented Trinity College at Rugby, Hockey & Cricket. He captained the Trinity Rugby 1st XV Team in 1959 and was awarded the Trinity Lion award. He was the vice captain of the Trinity Hockey team in 1959 and was awarded College Colours in Hockey.

He also represented the Trinity 1st XI cricket team. Additionally, he was an athlete and a basketball player too. With this excellent school career record Denzil was also a School Prefect of Lemuel House in 1960 and later appointed Senior Prefect of Trinity College Kandy in the same year. However this appointment lasted only for a week since he opted to pursue a career with the Sri Lanka Army (Formerly Ceylon Army) and was enlisted as an officer cadet and posted to Diyathalawa for his initial three months training before leaving for a two year officer training program at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom. These circumstances prevented him from qualifying for the coveted Ryde Gold Medal for the best all-round student of Trinity College in 1960. Thus, an academic career with the University of Peradeniya to which he had gained entry also had to be abandoned.

During early 1960s, Denzil's admires were all at sea, since he was to leave for the United Kingdom for a two year stint. I can still remember that day

when all his close family associates came down to Colombo and met in the Colombo harbor to say 'bon voyage' since it was a three weeks journey by ship to U.K. at that time. Some few of us were privileged to accompany him onboard the ship "CARTHAGE".



*DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA AS A CAPTAIN
KANDY SPORTS CLUB RUGBY TEAM 1969.*

Having successfully completed his assignment Denzil returned to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in mid 1962 and assumed duties as a Lieutenant in the Armored Corps Regiment of the Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Army. He had a very successful period with the regiment and also represented the Army sports club at rugby for the Clifford Cup tournament. The supportive role played by him towards his fellow soldiers helped the Army sports club to gradually develop their performance and to be a leading side in the Clifford Cup Tournament.

In 1964, Denzil was awarded his second overseas training course to Bovington Military Academy in the United Kingdom and left for U.K. However this was a six month program and he was able to complete it with great success and then returned to Sri Lanka to be once again back with

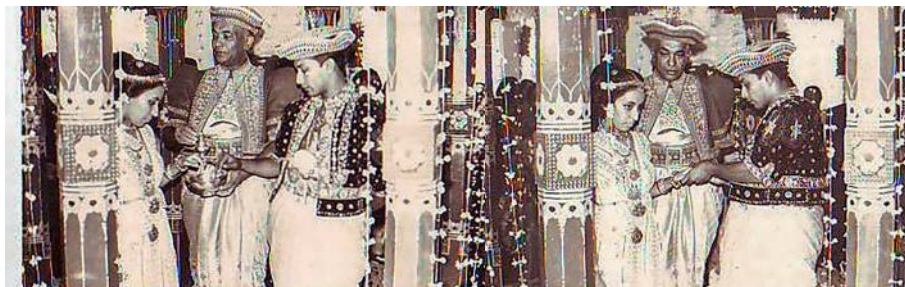
his Regiment Armoured Corps. Since then Denzil was able to perform as a true soldier/officer and commanded the respect of his superiors, peers as well as the subordinates.

He then was sent home on leave due to many issues. During this period he spent his entire time in Kandy with his close family associates acting as a trouble shooter and helped Kandy Sports Club to produce a formidable rugby outfit to challenge all A division clubs in Colombo, Tri Services Sports Clubs, Police Sports Club & Up-Country Planters' Rugby Clubs. As a result of his efforts, he was given the captaincy of the Kandy Sports Club in 1969 and ended up as Runners-Up to C.R.& F.C. at the Clifford Cup 'A' division tournament. He also captained the upcountry combined clubs team and also represented the All Ceylon Team (Sri Lanka) against French & British top division clubs. During this period Denzil did not forget his alma mater Trinity College and was also involved in coaching the Trinity 1st XV outfits in 1968, 1969 and in 1970 to help Trinity produce Bradby Shield-winning and league-champion teams. Due to his honest efforts he was able to command the respect of all communities living in Kandy and surrounding areas, including the rugby circles in Colombo and the Up-Country.



*DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA (COACH) & E.L. FERNANDO (PRINCIPAL)
WITH 1969 T.C.K.COLOURSMEN – BEFORE THE BRADBY*

Also during this period whilst playing Rugby for Kandy Sports Club he met Lalini Ratwatte, the younger daughter of Kenneth and Merle Ratwatte as it blossomed into healthy love affair and eventually they got married in December 1970. Lalini was a tower of strength to Denzil and was a very understanding and accommodative person, and supported Denzil to a great extent in developing his career in the army as well as building a healthy relationship with his family, friends and relations



DENZIL AT HIS WEDDING.

In 1970, he was reinstated in his substantive post in the rank of Captain, and later Major. With the respect & confidence he had gained he was made in charge of the security of the then head of state Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranayake. He was then promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel. While playing an active role in the Sri Lanka Army he continued to coach as well as play Rugby for the Sri Lanka Army and the Defense Services. In 1973/74 Denzil was appointed as the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union. This year the first ever Rugby Asiad was held in Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka ended up as Runners-Up to Japan.

*AS COACH WITH THE T.C.K
RUGBY TEAM 1969
AFTER A VICTORY OVER
S.T. COLLEGE MT. LAVINIA*



During the latter part of 1974, Denzil was selected to attend the prestigious British Army Staff College Military Academy, Camberly Surrey in the United Kingdom for a period of one year. On his return to Sri Lanka after successfully completing his overseas assignment he was once again back at his old regiment Armoured Corps for some time and was posted to the Officer Cadet Training School at the military academy in Diyathalawa. His extended family and friends were regular visitors in his bungalow. With the completion of the stint in Diyathalawa he moved to Army Headquarters Colombo and served in the operations desk until such time a posting was given to him in Jaffna to serve in the Task Force Anti Illicit Immigration (TaFAII). During this period he was able to successfully study the terrain in the Jaffna Peninsula.



DENZIL WITH HIS COUSINS IN NUWARA ELIYA

Having completed his Stint at the TaFAII head quarters in Jaffna he was once again back at the operations desk of the Sri Lanka Army head quarter for some time and later moved to his Regiment Armoured Corps as the commanding officer. In 1989 he once again left overseas to the United Kingdom on another Military training assignment at the prestigious Royal College Of Defense Studies (RCDS) which is the highest institution for military training. However he was asked to return prematurely to the

Island. But due to pressure applied by the sponsors and the U.K. Government he was permitted to go back to continuing his training in the U.K. Having successfully completed his training, Denzil was appointed the Commander of the Western Command stationed at the Panagoda cantonment in the rank of Major General.

When the Eelam war started in the Eastern Province, Denzil was sent as the overall operations commander. During his short stay in the Eastern Province he was able to contain the L.T.T.E. offensive to a greater extent but as a result of the Northern Province also coming under heavy attack he was moved to the Northern Province as the overall operations commander based at the Palaly Cantonment in the Jaffna peninsula. He led his troops effectively from the front, as he fought many battles bravely. The Vadamarachchi Operation, "Operation Balavegaya," Beach Landing to save the Elephant Pass Security forces camp (Minipe Kularatne's heroic acts)", evacuation of the Security forces from the Jaffna fort are a few of the many operations he led.

His last Security council meeting as the Northern Commander was in Colombo in early August 1992 which was presided by the head of state. Denzil expressed his frank views with regards to the security situation in the North, and wanted to continue the L.T.T.E neutralizing operation. Denzil and a set of elite officers laid their lives for the nation on the 8th of August 1992 at Aralai point Jaffna. The whole nation mourned the deaths of these elite officers.

His demise was a great loss to his beloved immediate family, other close relatives, to the Sri Lanka Army and other Security forces and to the whole nation; Sri Lanka. As a civilian, I had the opportunity to closely associate with Denzil for over 40+ years and the loss to me was unimaginable. If so, what about the immediate family, his relatives, friends and fellow soldiers? Well Denzil, 27th July 2012 happens to be your 72nd birth anniversary

and today, 8th of August 2012 will be your 20th death anniversary. Your family continues to bestow the blessings of the noble triple gem by holding various religious ceremonies continuously for the last 20 years and this year too it will be carried out. The Religious ceremonies will continue in the years to come since all your followers appreciate the services rendered by you to your family, relatives, friends, and the Sri Lankan society as a whole. We will continue to remember you and your name, and it will be written in the history books in Sri Lanka and the entire globe so that the future generations will know that you were a born soldier, a true leader loved by all.



DENZIL WITH HIS FAMILY

Also may I add that through Denzil's leadership, his contribution to the Sri Lankan society was immense? To his family; he was a devoted husband and a father, to his parents; an obedient son, to his sister and brothers; a trusted friend, to his other relations; he was a role model accepted by all, to his fellow soldiers; he was a commander with a genuine heart, to his friends; he was a person always willing to play a supportive role and guide them, to his alma mater; his contribution was immeasurable, and finally to the sporting bodies in Sri Lankan Schools & Clubs (specially Rugby); his support was enormous, to the religious institutions of all faiths; his contribution was accepted by all, to the Sri Lankan civil society & specially in the people in the North and East / Border villages; the services rendered by him are appreciated till this day.

We true Sri Lankans today salute you Denzil and accept you as a true General and a person with a golden heart. In appreciation of your services to the nation, various medals & gallantry awards were given to you by the S.L Army, Politicians, Heads of State, but the greatest award you received from the people of Sri Lanka is that they accepted you as their hero and a genuine leader with honesty and integrity.

At this stage I must pay a compliment to Denzil's wife Lalini for single-handedly bringing up the three children, Roshani, Shanilka, & Dilshan and enabling them to move on in life as true Sri Lankan citizens with established professions for themselves. This was Denzil's wish and Lalini, you will be rewarded by your children in the years to come.

Finally may I take this opportunity to Thank You Denzil, for the guidance provided and the supportive role you played in my life for almost forty plus years which helped me to move forward in life with success as one of your close associates and a true "Trinitian".

"Respice Finem" - "Look to the End"

May You Attain Nirvana

*Article Written By Sunil Keppetipola
(Class of 1970. Trinity College Kandy.)*



BELOW PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM THE LIFE OF
DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA



LIEUT GEN. DENZIL KOBBEKADUWA

RWP, RSP, VSV, USP. psc. rcds.

By Wg. Cdr. E. H. Ohlmus (SLAF Retd.)

The bomb that exploded in an Army Land Rover at Araly Point on August 8, 1992, took away a gentleman and a true friend. Denzil had already proved himself as a distinguished General, who led from the front. He was knowledgeable, daring and popular and these were never in doubt. So much so, this was perhaps why General "Bull" Weeratunga hand-picked him (much to the chagrin of many - some of whom I knew were unable to hold a candle to Denzil) to serve in his Northern Command.

Denzil was always aware of what he was doing, knew whom he was leading, what he was going to achieve and to whom he can talk to as a friend. He was also very conscious that the well-being of the defenceless civilian and the unarmed LTTE cadre in custody, were the responsibility of the State. This sense of fair play and concern simply seemed to exude out of him, and which would certainly have earned for the Defence Establishment every chance of a speedy and just resolving of a totally unnecessary conflict. But this was not to be after that fateful day in Kayts. The then widely speculated but unproven theory was that the bomb represented an anxious unseen coterie who was faulting Denzil only because the Tamil population liked him.

Denzil, especially after reaching Flag Rank emphasized the need to prevent those who have suffered because of the conflict, from being further trodden upon. If not for his untimely demise, we may have perhaps been able to see him show the way for all Sri Lankans to extend their hand of friendship to one another and more importantly, to convince the leaders of this country that all the money wasted on weapons of destruction, be used for the welfare of all people north, south, east and west alike.

Many hundreds of appreciations, editorials and articles about this very inspiring soldier, exemplary officer, outstanding sportsman, meticulous sports administrator, devoted husband, loving father and genuine friend have already been recorded and scripted. But some hitherto unpublicized anecdotes will reveal another facet of this good man as a simple, lovable, mild-mannered person, yet playful with a puckish sense of humour who showed genuine concern for the young and the feeble - qualities no doubt inherited from and nurtured by his wonderful parents and dutifully sustained after marriage by his caring wife, Lali.

In the late 1970's, he was attached to the Army Training Centre at Diyatalawa. He and his family were very welcome visitors to the Air Force Camp. He relaxed with his wife and children in the well laid out children's park, or dropped in to play basketball, tennis or squash, go boating or visit the Air Force officers on the Station with whom he and his family were very close. When a group of Air Force officers decided to build a second squash court in the SLAF (there was already one at Katunayake) out of donations they would obtain from well-wishers, and from their own personal funds, a contribution of Rs. 250 (then a princely sum) was made by Major D L Kobbekaduwa, the only Army officer to do so. Denzil is in the group photograph taken on the occasion when the court was opened with an exhibition match between Wing Commanders Brendon Sosa and Tony Dirckze, two versatile sportsmen in the Regiment Branch of the Air Force. Denzil's name also appears in the List of Honour, even today.

When refereeing a 'friendly' rugger match between Army Cadets (he was their coach as well) and an Air Force XV, on the Polo Grounds adjoining the Army Training Centre in Diyatalawa, Denzil was so engrossed with the game, that he instinctively continued to coach and yell instructions to his charges while play was in progress! The airmen did not mind this at all especially when he "forgot" to "blow" for an infringement which resulted in a try by the Air force. The reason: he had dropped the whistle and did

not realise it, much to the amusement of the spectators who gave him a rousing cheer ! Such was his popularity in the ATC and the SLAF!

Denzil liked to play hockey. We knew this and on many occasions gladly invited him to don the Station's 'Blue and Gold' jersey, in friendly matches that were played on the Rendezvous Parade Ground, which was a stone's throw from his married quarters.

When the Bishop of Badulla, the late Rt. Rev. Mgr. Leo Nanayakkara was on a pastoral visit to the parish church and convent in Diyatalawa, his car gave trouble. The driver arranged for the "baas" in the only garage in town to take a look. In the meantime, I phoned Denzil to borrow his car to take the Bishop Leo back if the need arose. But, Denzil being Denzil, not only did he say "OK," but volunteered to drive to Badulla himself. In the meantime he invited the Bishop to his married quarters where a sumptuous afternoon tea was served. Denzil was spared the trip to Badulla, as the repair was a minor one and fixed within an hour.

An amusing incident took place at 'Bambara House', the then Air Force Officers' holiday bungalow at China Bay, where we were holidaying with friends. My nephew (now a Commander in the SLN) was trying to learn to swim by himself. Denzil observing this, tried to demonstrate the correct technique, missed a foothold and slipped and the next thing heard was a 'plonk' in the water. Denzil was dazed but not hurt with this belly-landing. Undeterred, he carried on his coaching lessons and over the next few days, the lad was able to swim one breadth of the pool. Many years later, this lad, as an Officer Cadet at the Royal Naval College Dartmouth, happened to meet Denzil in London - Denzil himself was on an Army Staff Course-and they had a big laugh when the young Cadet recalled the incident, after identifying himself.

When on leave in Colombo, Denzil spent most of his time with his family. It was not unusual to see the Kobbekaduwa family in their car, parked in

the shade by a cricket ground witnessing a match, or in a shopping mall on a Saturday morning, or visiting a friend or a relation for a quiet evening chat. He was a family man and this fine quality definitely influenced his way of life in the Army.

Everyone who knew him well loved and admired him. Those who served with and under him respected and trusted him. They surely miss him and will no doubt specially and fondly remember him on the 27th of this month - his 64th birth anniversary.

An Army officer, who served under Denzil, once wrote, "General Kob-bekaduwa fought bravely and relentlessly to safeguard the integrity of our country for a better tomorrow for all Sri Lankans — he was truly a man of the (20th) century." I could not agree more!



CONCLUSION

*"Asevana cha balanam,
Panditanan cha sevana,
Puja cha pujaniyanam,
Etham mangalamuttamam"
(Lord Buddha)*

*("Do not keep company with fools,
But associate with the wise,
Honouring those who are worthy of honour,
This is the best auspicious performance.")*

Post-independence Sri Lanka (Ceylon) had many leaders who adopted different leadership styles. It is up to the emerging leaders of the future to analyse their performance (successes & failures) and what they did for the people of Sri Lanka and the nation.

The leadership provided by the political establishment in Sri Lanka over the last four decades to the Sri Lankan people and its Security forces is a subject that has to be analysed very carefully by the emerging future leaders of our mother Lanka. It is sad to mention that there were more instances of betrayal than providing effective leadership. This made the position of the Sri Lankan people and its security forces more and more complex in fighting the war against L.T.T.E terrorism.

The halting of the Vadamarachchi operation, Signing of the Indo – Lanka peace accord, issuing orders to the S.L. Police to surrender to the L.T.T.E. terrorist, Issuing orders to the S.L. Army to surrender to the L.T.T.E. (This

order was not executed due to the refusal of the battle commanders in the war front), The exposing of the Millennium City security force establishment to the L.T.T.E. The infamous peace deal with the L.T.T.E. and demoralizing the Security Forces by indicating to them that the war cannot be won are some instances of betrayal that has to be analysed by the future leaders.

When the Mahinda Rajapakse era commenced in 2006 the Security establishments were in a very poor state. Lot of professional Soldiers were no more. They were killed or missing in action. A lot of them left the Security forces and had gone on early retirement. (Due to loss of confidence with the political leadership.) However the new political leadership was able to re-group and provide effective leadership to the Security forces of Sri Lanka to work as a team and end the war against one of the most brutal terrorist groups in the world. – L.T.T.E.

However, I request to the present day young leaders and future leaders to be, it is worthwhile to analyse the present day scenario of the security force personnel who fought to save the nation and its citizens from terrorism. The other day a retiring war hero had mentioned that he has to retire from the Army after 35 years of service with a war criminals tag. This is a very sad situation to be in and will demoralise all retired and serving security service personnel. Hope this will not be another betrayal?

As Lord Buddha once mentioned to his followers, "Do not believe in the Dhamma he preaches blindly but to study it deeply and try to understand it by yourself, it's only a path to lead a better life for yourself to move forward in the journey of Sansara and finally achieve Nirvana." Finally let me once again appeal to the future leaders of Sri Lanka do not blindly believe in what has been preached by your past leaders as gospel truth but study deeply what they have said and decide for yourself the path to lead the nation.

The sacrifices made by Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa and his fellow Officers & Soldiers in the Tri forces will be in vain if the future leaders fail to provide an effective leadership.

Let me conclude by indicating to the future leaders of all Sri Lankan establishments, (Political, Security Forces, Governmental, Private Sector & Sports bodies) lead your establishments from the front and work as a team, ask what you could do for the nation and its citizens & command their respect and not ask citizens to pay for the welfare of the leaders and demand for their respect. This is the philosophy adopted by Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa as a true leader and he was able to earn & command the respect of all. – Peoples General. He was no politician at any time.

May Sri Lanka and its people lives as Sri Lankans in upholding the Unity, Territorial Integrity & Sovereignty of the Motherland.

"There is light at the end of the tunnel."

"Respicefinem." – "Look to the end."



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The contributors of tributes to a General.

The contributors of appreciations to a General.

Leading to Excel, sales training bulletin, Lipton, India

The photographs in this book are from the albums of the Kobbekaduwa family & the compilers collection of photographs since late 1950's.

The Kobbekaduwa Family

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Tributes and Appreciations to a General

**Lt. General Denzil
Kobbekaduwa**

RWP RSP VSV USP rcds psc

The Most Respected Person of the Last Century!