

The prolonged North East conflict resulted in considerable number of deaths and casualties from the ranks and files of the Army. Substantial number of officers and soldiers rendered permanently disabled owing to battle casualties and therefore it was imperative to rehabilitate them. In the early 90s rehabilitation assumed a much greater degree of importance in view of the ever increasing numbers of officers and other ranks with varying degrees of disabilities and the realization that they will have to be meaningfully re-absorbed into the society by providing them with a near normal life.

The Director Rehabilitation Brig (Dr) HIK Fernando assisted by his staff officers Maj EMG Wickramanayaka and Capt SJN Mahesh Kumara having explored the feasibility in gainfully employing the disabled officers and other ranks by providing vocational training in garment industry came up with the Ranaviru Apparel project in 1993. The Director CITI Mr Rohana Kuruppu and Ms Yohini Thevathasan, the Snr Executive - Project Department NDB have lively contributed in realizing the project proposals and finally the Commander of the Army Lt Gen GH De Silva have approved the proposal forwarded by Dir Rehab.

Having lengthy consultations with experts in the fields of finance and garment industry the initial works of the Ranaviru Apparel commenced and on the auspices of Mr Kumar Devapura Chairman Tri Star Apparel provided implant training in Tri Star Apparel Factories in various designations of jobs to the selected officers and other ranks.

To establish the Ranaviru Apparel Factory, the well-known philanthropist and land owned proprietor Mr David Merick Pieris has donated five acres of land and another five acres for fraction of market value. Parliamentarian Mr Pandu Bandaranayaka's intervention in this regard was commendable. The expenses for this had been met with funds obtained from the directorate of additional welfare as directed by the Commander of the Army. On 27th March 1996 the foundation stone for the construction of the factory have been laid and the road leading to the Factory was renamed as David Merick Peiris Mawtha to honour him for his great deeds.

The estimated total cost for the project was Rs 41.66mn and the required finance for the project were received from contribution of one day salary of the officers and other ranks of the Sri Lanka Army, Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association, National Exporters Association, SPUR, Garment Buying Office Association, JK Agencies, Ranliya Garment Industries Ltd, Sankyo Lanka Pvt Ltd, Sri Lanka Chamber of Garment Exporters and Mr David Merick Peiris, Singer Sri Lanka, Lapp Trading Ltd, Bobbin Pvt Ltd, JK Agencies, Bandara and Sons, BHP Ltd, Hulugalla Samarasinghe and Co, Mr Weerasinghe, Ms Yohini Thevathasan have donated Machines, Tools, Equipment and Services.

On 23rd August 1997 with the available 25 machines and 90 disabled soldiers production was commenced in an accommodation building of other ranks and the COS Maj Gen HS Hapuarachchi USP have grace the occasion as the chief guest. However on 10th December 1998 the Ranaviru Apparel ceremoniously declared open by the Hon Minister of Irrigation, Power and

Energy and Deputy Minister for Defense Mr Anuruddh aRathwatte on the invitation of commander of the Army Lt Gen R De S Daluwte WWV RWP RSP VSV USP lom ndc psc with 264 Machines and 500 disabled personnel as the staff.

Owing to quality and other beneficial factors the AHQ wanted RVAPL to under take all of its no 7/8 uniforms and in accordance with the AHQ direction RVAPL took the initiative to double its production capacity by purchasing a factory owned by Boyagane Apparel at Alawwa.

The two factories were able to meet international standards and functions under CEO. The Ranaviru Apparel have been able to bag number of awards including National Production Award 2010/2011 and National Green Award 2012. And also the recipient of the Taiki Akimoto Excellence Award 2010 for maintaining 5S, which implemented in the year 2009 in view of further enhancing efficiency and productivity. During the period the Ranaviru Apparel has amassed assets worth of 700mn and gained reputation by sharing its excellence with the community by means of community services.