

SIGNALS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA



FIFTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS

30th July 2006



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Message from  
**LIEUTENANT GENERAL GSC FONSEKA RWP RSP rcds psc**  
**COMMANDER OF THE ARMY**

It is with great pleasure that I write to congratulate the Signal Association of Sri Lanka on its completion of 50 years of dedicated service to the ex-servicemen of the Signal corps. These ex-servicemen have given of their best to the Army and the Country, some during World War II and others in the war against the separatist terrorists of the North and East. The Army owes much to them and therefore they deserve the best. I am happy to note that both officers and men who left the service in more recent times have banded together to help their less fortunate comrades and their families. That these gentlemen have thought it fit to devote their valuable time and effort for the cause of their erstwhile comrades-in-arms speaks volumes for their 'esprit de corps'.

I am aware that the Signals Association is the rallying point for all ex-signallers, be it in times of happiness or in times of distress. The support and comfort it offers to its members is most laudable. It is also a vital part of the Ex-servicemen's Association and has always been in the fore front of its activities.

The Association has been fortunate to have had some eminent persons at the helm like Colonel VC Kelaart OBE, ED, Colonel CR de Silva ED, and Colonel WEM Fernando ED who were the pioneers and in later years Major MJFR Perera, Colonel AMM Fareed and Major Tudor Perera. Today the reins are in the capable hands of Major General Chandra Abayaratna VSV USP, an officer of more recent vintage. I am certain that with his experience and ability the Signal Association will grow from strength to strength.

The Signal Association is an example of what a well run institution of this nature can do for its members. May it grow and prosper and continue to serve the Country as loyally and devotedly as it has done in the past. I wish the Association every success and good fortune in the years to come.





Message from  
**MAJOR WM WEERASOORIYA**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE SRI LANKA**  
**EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

It is a great pleasure to send this message to the Souvenir published on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Signal Association of Sri Lanka.

Having associated closely with the Signal Regiment during my period of service with the Engineers and serving together in the Ex-servicemen's Association for almost the last three decades with my contemporaries in the Signal Regiment, I have noted with great interest the steady progress made over the years by the Signals Association.

Undoubtedly every member of the Signals Association could be proud of the fact that the Signals Association in the last 50 years have become one of those associations in SLESA who maintains a very high standard in keeping with the objects of the SLESA Constitution of fostering the spirit of comradeship and esprit-de corps among all members while extending welfare measures to the needy members. I therefore consider that reaching the milestone of Golden Jubilee with a steady progress is a fitting occasion to celebrate for which, I am aware that elaborate arrangements have been made

I therefore while congratulating the Signals Association for the success they have achieved also wish to thank all those who worked tirelessly to achieve that success. It is my fervent wish that the Signals Association will go from strength to strength and achieve success in all the future endeavors.

I thank the Chairman and the members of Signals Association for giving me this opportunity to send greetings on this memorable occasion.



Message from  
**MAJOR GENERAL CJ ABAYARATNA VSV USP**  
**CHAIRMAN SIGNALS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA**

I consider it to be my good fortune to be the Chairman of the Signals Association of Sri Lanka when it is celebrating its Golden Jubilee and it is with great pride and pleasure that I send this message.

The Association has a proud record of service to the ex-servicemen of the Signal Corps. It has not only offered support and comfort to its members at times of distress but has also kept the spirit of Signals alive with organized events and regular meetings. The Executive Committee should be congratulated on their selfless and honourary service. Special mention should be made of the Secretary, Mr. MIM Fausi and the Treasurer, Mr. Tony Wazir who have toiled endlessly over the years and borne the burden of office with great fortitude. The sudden demise of Mr. JN Peiris, our long standing Vice Chairman and genial host at every gathering, is an irreparable loss.

The Association has contributed much to our parent body, the Sri Lanka Ex-servicemen's Association and many of our members have served on their sub-committees with distinction. In turn SLESA has been very supportive in all of our activities.

It is the Signal Brigade and the Signal Regiments that have been our tower of strength. They have backed us to the hilt and it is with their support that we have been able to reach great heights.

50 years is a considerable period of time in the life of any organization, especially those of a voluntary nature. The fact that it has not only survived 50 years but has also grown in size and stature is proof enough of its usefulness and contribution to the welfare of the ex-serviceman and his family over the past years.

As we celebrate our Golden Jubilee, we remember the pioneers who laid an unshakeable foundation for this Association and many others after them who gave of their best to sustain the Association with the meager resources available to them. They have left an indelible mark. The names of Col CR de Silva, Lt Col VC Kellaart and Col WEM Fernando come to mind as some of the pioneers and in later years, Maj MJFR Perera, Col AMM Fareed, Maj Tudor Perera, Mr. WG Cruz and Mr. Dalton Perera. Today we salute these great gentlemen of honour and unquestioned integrity for giving us an Association worthy of its name.

Finally I would like to congratulate and say "Well done!" to the Organising Committee for an excellent job. I thank The Commander of the Army, The Colonel Commandant of the Signal Corps and The Commander of the Signal Brigade for permitting us to use the Army facilities.

I wish the Golden Jubilee celebrations all success!





Message from  
**MAJOR GENERAL YSA DE SILVA USP psc**  
**COLONEL COMMANDANT**  
**SRI LANKA SIGNAL CORPS**

It gives me immense pleasure to issue this message as the Colonel Commandant of the Corps of Signals, for the souvenir being published on the occasion of Golden Jubilee Celebration of Signals Association.

Since the inception of Signals Association, they have contributed in numerous ways especially on welfare measures of serving signalers. It was amply shown in number of occasions with the initiatives taken to fulfill the welfare of serving disabled signalers by way of donating clutches, wheel chairs etc. Their eagerly participation and support rendered in all Regimental events and activities have given enormous courage and confidence to serving signalers all the time.

On this memorable occasion my felicitation also goes to the Hon Chairman and all members for functioning this association in a highly organized and an effective manner. I am confident that the family of Signalers is able to work under one flag to achieve our goals productively in the years to come as well.

On behalf of all officers and other rankers of the Corps of Signals, I wish all members of the Signals Association and their families very best in future endeavors.



Message from  
**BRIGADIER TF MEEDIN RSP Ldmc**  
**CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER/**  
**COMMANDER SIGNAL BRIGADE**

As the Chief Signal Officer/Commander Signal Brigade of the Sri Lanka Army, it gives me great pleasure to release this message in extending greetings on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Signals Association of Sri Lanka.

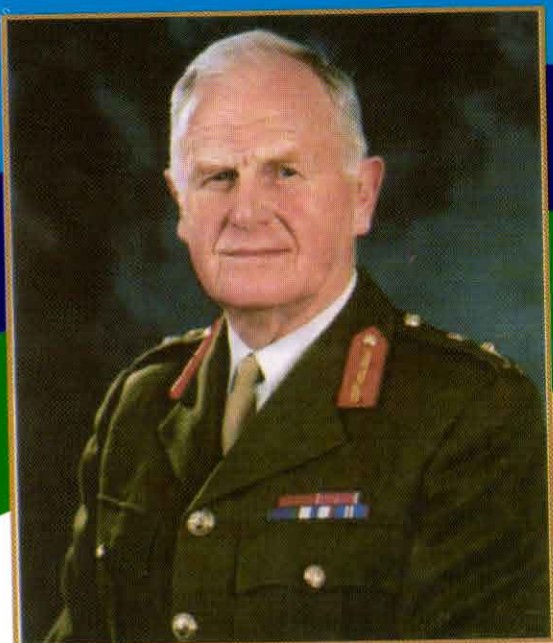
The Corps of Signals has grown from strength to strength and it's with deep sense of gratitude that I recall the services rendered by the past members of the Signal Association. Some of these members are no more and some of them have left seeking greener pastures, and some remain to drive the Signals Association for the betterment of all signalers.

Signals Association is a permanent member of the world recognized Ex-Servicemen Association of Sri Lanka to which it is affiliated.

It has also performed a yeomen service in the field of welfare and rehabilitation of ex-signalers who served the country loyally and gallantly during "World War II". Most deservingly the Signals Association has a proud record of service in providing assistance to ex-servicemen and their dependents. This is indeed a clear reflection of the dedication and devotion displayed by the office bearers of the Signals Association who worked over the years relentlessly and they will strive hard in doing so.....

I would like to take this opportunity of assuring the Signals Association, the required support of the Signals Brigade in all its noble ventures true to our motto "Certa Cito" and it will continue successively





Message from  
**GENERAL SIR SAM COWAN KCB CBE**  
**MASTER OF SIGNALS**  
**AND**  
**PRESIDENT ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION**

I am honoured to have been asked to contribute to this souvenir magazine celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Signals Association of Sri Lanka. We in the Royal Corps of Signals and the Royal Signals Association are extremely proud of our historical links with the Sri Lanka Signal Corps and Signals Association over the last fifty-five years and we look forward to maintaining and strengthening our relationship in the years ahead.

I pay tribute to the members of the Association who have served their country and Corps with pride, dedication and honour. They truly deserve to be remembered and their service celebrated on this special occasion.

I send you my congratulations and very best wishes on your Golden Jubilee.

**THE FIRST COMMANDING OFFICER**  
**Lt Col D V BROHIER**



Ceylon Signal Corps

**THE FIRST REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR**

**Mr. H P WHITE**



Ceylon Signal Corps





## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FIRST RSM

(Written by Mr. HP White for the Silver Jubilee Journal)

When I joined the Ceylon Engineers as a Sapper in 1930. I was posted to No. 3 Signal Company, which then consisted of 2 officers and about 20 other ranks. The OC Company was Captain A T Kingston, a World War I Veteran, with an energetic Instructor in CSMI Campbell and a body of enthusiastic soldiers, we soon became experts in our trade.

At the time the only means of communication were Line, Flags, Lamp, Heliograph and Despatch Riders. Wireless was introduced much later.

At the outbreak of hostilities on 3rd September, 1939, the entire Signal Company, which by then had expanded appreciably, was mobilised and moved to Trincomalee, with the exception of a small detachment which was retained in Colombo to provide a wireless link.

Within a short time, we became fully operational in Trincomalee and supplemented a small regular detachment of Royal Signals who maintained the Fixed Signal Services in Trincomalee.

In a matter of days we had completed the laying of hundreds of miles of cable : connecting of telephones to the numerous Units etc., establishment of a Signal Office and a Despatch Rider Service ; also the installation of a Switchboard of a larger capacity than hitherto existed.

Our period of mobilisation was most enjoyable. We lived under canvas on the Maidan and I remember the other Sergeants who shared my tent C R de Silva, H J Andriesz (he is no more) Shelly Foenander,

M A Sariman, Bob Dias, P D S Rajapakse and A G A Perera. We were a cheerful lot who struck together at all times and worked as a wonderful team. Our Officers, were Major G H Todd, 2/Lt Winston Mellis Fernando. H W Wood and H B Scott.

The next two years saw an unprecedented expansion of the Signal Company to meet the growing communication demands as a result of the increase in strength of other Units as well as the formation of new ones. This expansion in the Signals meant, of course, a proportionate requirement of Commissioned Officers and, in 1941, we saw the first ever other rank from our Company elevated to Commissioned status-Sargent C R de Silva. We in the Sergeants' Mess were naturally proud of his achievement and happy too, as we felt that a precedent had now been created in the granting of commissions to other ranks.

In October 1941, an additional Signal Company was formed (No. 4 Company) and four Sergeants, together with a few Junior N C O's were transferred to form the nucleus of this new Company. We welcomed a batch of raw recruits and in a short time had produced a well-trained body of men who were able to take their place with those of No. 3 Company. The OC Company was Lieut. H W Wood.

In March 1942, three more Sergeants received their Commissions as 2/Lt viz : H J Andriesz, M A Sariman and D V Brohier.

After the fall of Singapore. Ceylon became of Vital strategic importance and early 1942 saw the setting up of an Army Command at



the Colombo Museum. British and other Allied Troops began pouring into the Island, including a complete Regiment of Royal Signals, Who established their Headquarters at Royal College under the command of Lt Col Worrell. The first Chief Signals Officer of the Ceylon Command was Colonel Frank Wilson and a separate CSO's HQ was located in the Art Gallery.

It was Colonel Wilson who formed the local Auxiliary Territorial Service, and The Post and Telegraph Signals. Both of which were disbanded after the War. Both Signal Companies of the Ceylon Engineers were now placed under the operational command of Lt Col. Worrell and, for purposes of identity we sported a green shoulder title 'CDF Signals'. This found us in rather an incongruous situation since we now become responsible to the Army Signals on all operational matters but also had to carry out all administrative instructions laid down by the Ceylon Engineers.

It was at this stage that Major E A Bartlam, who was then in command of the CDF Signals (as we called ourselves) was released from his military duties to return to his civil job as Principal of the Ceylon Technical College and Major A W Samuel from the CPRC replaced him.

### BIRTH OF A NEW CORPS

The advent of Major Samuel saw us more settled for we were now directly responsible to him and, while some of our officers and men were attached to Command Signals, the majority of us formed the Base Area Signal complement.

Major Samuel, though essentially a CPRC Officer, soon became thoroughly conversant in all aspects of Signals. He

also attended a technical Course at the Signals Training Centre in Mhow (India). The vital importance of Signals had by now become evident and in a short time a notification in the Government Gazette announced the formation of a Ceylon Signal Corps as from 19th October, 1943, and accorded Army precedence next below the Corps of Ceylon Engineers.

This was indeed a momentous event and we were besieged by congratulatory messages from other units as well as the Royal Corps of Signals and the Indian Corps of Signals. Our first Commanding Officer was Lt Col A W Samuel, appropriately dubbed by us as the founder and the father of the Corps. The first Adjutant of the Corps was Captain D V Brohier and the first Regimental Sergeant Major -was H P White, who was allotted the new regimental number 'ONE' which in itself was something unique.

Recruiting began apace and two Companies were formed to start with-No. 1 Company under the command of Major C R de Silva. This was situated by the sea at Bentota and was essentially a training Company. No 3 Company was commanded by Major Winston Mellis Fernando and was a fully operational Company.

The commissioning of other ranks in the Corps had now become the rule rather than the exception, as it was felt that these men had the technical background which was so essential for officers in an unit such as ours. The other ranks who were eventually commissioned were P D S Rajapakse, N T Jobsz, LAD'Zilva, J E Fernando, C W Senaris, I V O Holsinger, B R C Wydeman, S M Perera, P W Sri Kanta, T S H Young, M Wijeneyake, A E Roberts, M J F R Perera, E Hesse, E N Senaris and V C La Brooy.





## A SECOND COMPANY

By the end of 1944, we had formed two additional companies-No 2 Company was commanded by Major V C Kelaart, who was no stranger to us as he was at one time in the Signal Company of the Ceylon Engineers and later its Adjutant. This Company was widely deployed in the maintenance of Signal Offices in Kandy, Kurunegala, Kekirawa and Vavuniya. We also had No 4 Company, which was located in Trinco-malee commanded by Major H W G Cooper and later by Major F S Critchley (both British Officers seconded to serve with us from the Royal Corps of Signals).

Up to this stage, we were working inclose co-operation with the Royal Corps of Signals in providing communications over the whole island as well as the manning of vital external wireless links to Troopers in London, Nairobi, Bangalore and New Delhi. However, as the imminent threat to Ceylon began to recede, a thinning-out process began with personnel of the Royal Signals being posted out to other theaters of war in the Far East and, eventually, we were left in full control. I can state with justifiable pride that everyone of us carried out our duties with skillful efficiency and in keeping with the high ideals that were set up for us. We were a Corps young in years but old in tradition and we certainly had every reason to be proud of our achievements.

At the end of 1944, Lt Col Samuel had to leave us and return to his civil duties. He was succeeded by Lt Col I Mackenzie of the Royal Signals who was posted to Ceylon from Burma. It was Lt Col Mackenzie who was responsible for designing our new cap badge, which was the original Royal Signals badge, but surmounted with an Elephant instead of the Crown.

With the cessation of hostilities in Europe in May 1945, a gradual repatriation of British Officers and soldiers commenced and, by August, 1945, Lt Col Mackenzie, Major Cooper, Major Critchley and the other British Officers who were with us had left. Lt Col F R Booth took over command next and he was followed in quick succession by Lt Col Liddiard and Lt Col King. In June, 1946, Major C R de Silva was appointed Officiating CO and the end of August of that year saw the eventual closing down of the Corps HQ. stationed at Campbell Park.

By the end of August 1946, we had each gone our separate ways-some back to their old jobs which awaited them, others to their own various vocations.

## Post-war Corps

Early 1947 saw the reorganisation of the Ceylon Defence Force on a postwar footing primarily for internal security duties and Major V C Kelaart was invited to re-organise and command the Ceylon Signal Corps (Volunteers) in accordance with this policy. Major Kelaart's second-in-command was Major C R de Silva, while Major D V Brohier agreed to relinquish his majority and accept the Adjutancy of the Corps, as Captain in the C.D.F. Staff Corps.

Ceylon's first Anniversary of Independence in February 1949, saw a detachment of the Signals on Ceremonial Parade for the first time under the command of Major Winston Mellis Fernando and the excellent performance of the Signals Detachment on that memorable occasion would have received a nod of approval from even a Depot trained RSM.



## SIGNALS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA – REFLECTIONS

Col A E T Perera (retd) RSP MSc (UCL London) MPhil (University of Glasgow) Vice Chairman

It is with a feeling of pride that we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Signals Association on 30th July 2006. This would be the most appropriate time to dwell into the history of the association over the past 50 years. In doing so one cannot forget what took place during the first 25 years of the association. It is therefore felt that both from an aspect of continuity as well as paying tribute to the personnel who recorded the events of the first 25 years, to extract the relevant parts from what appeared in the souvenir published to celebrate the Silver Jubilee. Therefore, reflections of the Golden Jubilee will comprise two parts, one attributed to the first twenty five years and the second part will reflect the saga of the period between the Silver and the Golden Jubilee.

### Reflections on the first twenty five years

One person, more than any other, to whom we owe a deep gratitude for the formation of the Signals Association, is the late Colonel C R de Silva, ED who later commanded the volunteer Signals unit when the Ceylon Army was formed in 1949. With the cessation of hostilities at the end of World War II, personnel of the Ceylon Signal Corps were demobilized in 1946. Coming from a Technical Unit and being trained in many fields, a good number of persons found employment in the Civil Aviation Department and as Wireless Operators (Civilians) in the Police Department. The few unemployed, were assisted by their colleagues in affluent positions. Ex-Signals personnel had no organised body to further their interests and to promote better conditions of service in their civilian employment. An idea, conceived and encouraged by the late Col C R de Silva, E D supported by the late Col W E M Fernando, E D, Lt Col V C Kelaart, O B E, E D, and backed by Ex-Signals Personnel, became reality with the formation of the Ceylon Signals Corps Ex-Servicemen's Association on 15th December, 1955. The membership of this Association was confined to Ex-Signals Personnel who had served in the Signals Coy., or the Ceylon Engineers' or the Ceylon Signals Corps at any time during the period 3rd September, 1939 to 31st August, 1946. The first Chairman of the Association was the late Lt Col V C Kelaart, O B E, E D, and its first Hon. Secretary was Major D V Brohier.

The Association through the efforts of its affluent members, was able to have the "War Service" of its members employed in the Civil Aviation and Police Departments, reckoned for purposes of salary increments. Again, through the efforts of its members especially those employed in the Post and Telecommunications Department, the association was able to prevail upon the authorities to provide facilities to those desirous of obtaining their Wireless Telegraph Operators (Special) Certificate, to enable them to find employment on sea-going vessels.

With an insight to the future and to ensure the continuance of the Association, wise judgment prompted the amending of the Rules for its membership. In 1957 rules were amended enabling personnel of the Signals Corps (Regulars & Volunteers) to become members of the association. The name too was changed to Signals Association of Ceylon. The word Ceylon was later changed to Sri Lanka in keeping with the change of the name of the country in 1972.

An event of significance to the Associations worth recording is the 25th anniversary Celebrations





of the Ceylon Signals Corps in 1968. To mark the occasion the 1 Regt. CSC., held a parade, commanded by its 2 I/C. Major A M M Fareed. The 'Salute' at this parade was taken by Colonel W E M Fernando, ED, our Chairman of the Signals Association at the time. Nevertheless, what was of greater significance was that two of our members with 25 years' continuous service in the Ceylon Signals Corps, participated in these celebrations. One was Major (QM) T K Passela, as a Squadron Commander and the other Capt (QM) A I Martil as a participant in the motor cycle 'Stunt Riding' display. Both these officers, were promoted from the ranks. It should also be recorded for posterity that our members formed the nucleus of the Ceylon Signals Corps of Independent Ceylon.

In the Silver Jubilee Year, the Association hails with pride the recent re-instatement in the Sri-Lanka Army of two of our members and their immediate promotions to higher rank. One is Lt Col L J I Fernando, psc and the other Major A M M Fareed - promoted to Rank of Brigadier and Colonel respectively. The Association is also proud to record that two of our members held appointments as 'Experts' under agencies of the U N O One is Mr. A H H Perera, presently Narcotics Expert stationed at Bangkok. The other is Mr B S J Fernando who served in Uganda as a 'Training Expert' from August, 1977 to December, 1978 on an assignment under the UNDP/ITU Programme.

Looking back over the last 25 years, the Association can proudly claim to have justified its existence. With the demise of our founding fathers, a veteran soldier and founder member Major M J F R Perera, has been chosen to be at the helm of affairs. We are also proud that in this Silver Jubilee year, he has been elected a Vice-President of the Sri Lanka Ex-Servicemen's Association. He has always been ably assisted by devoted members in the Executive Committee, presently among whom are; M B K Cooray (Vice Chairman), Capt. P D S Rajapakse, ED, Messrs M W A Doray, C M G Dias and B S J Fernando (Asst Hony. Secretary), themselves, founder members of the association. With the comforting thought that the association has always upheld the objectives for which it has been formed, together with the willing co-operation of its members, the association could march on to the future with confidence.

It is with great respect that we record here that the celebrations connected with the Silver jubilee of the Signals association were conducted in December 1980. The late Major MJFR Perera who was the energetic President at that time took a very keen interest in organizing the event with the support of his troop of executive committee members.

#### **Reflections of the period between the Silver and Golden Jubilee.**

First let me commence by thanking all those Signal members who set the highest standards in the management and organization of the Signal Association. We inherited an organization that was rich in its traditions and a well managed institution that was the cynosure of all other associations. For the first time we had to divert our attention towards the numerous regular signalers who gave their lives so that we can breathe an air of freedom. The association meetings now commence with 'two minutes silence' remembering the signalers who had laid their lives. I doubt this was a feature of the previous era.

Major M J F R Perera relinquished Chairmanship in 1982 and Col A M M Fareed took over the reigns thereafter. During Col Fareed's tenure he instilled discipline into the association for which he was well known whilst serving as a regular officer in the Corps of Signals. Here again he was ably supported by WO 1 D C Pereira as the secretary. The annual dance organized during this period was very much appreciated by all the members. It was a fine occasion for members and their wives to meet



and enjoy themselves on the dance floor to the rhythm of some fine music provided by a popular band. Col A M M Fareed held office till 1988 and then it was the turn of the late Major Tudor Perera to take over as Chairman. He was in the chair for over 4 consecutive years. His cavalier mode of Chairmanship saw the association grow in strength and being involved in numerous social activities. He was the live wire of the association and as the immediate past President gave admirable support to the incumbent office bearers until his demise in Feb 2002. He was fortunate to have the ever energetic WO 1 Dalton Periera as the secretary who was extremely apt in keeping all transactions and administrative tasks in his mind rather than resorting to a file. He carried out his tasks very well until age made him to retire from active participation of the affairs of the association.

Another most important milestone of the Association was the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Signals Corps (1943-1993) in 1993. Our members also participated in a series of events organized for the occasion.

The most significant feature of the celebration was the participation of Col. D.V. Brohier ED, the 1st Commanding Officer of 1st Signals Regiment (1958- 1962). He made a special visit to Sri Lanka to participate in this event memorable to both the Signals Association and the Signals Corps equally. Col. Brohier who was the chief guest was afforded a Guard of Honour on 19 October 1993 by the Signals Corps at the Regimental Parade Square at Panagoda. A point that astounded all the officers was his agility, smartness and poise with which he inspected the guard of honour. Smartly turned out in light cr am suit he held himself high above all other officers of a much younger age group. He strode past the line of signalmen forming the guard of honour with such stature, which won the admiration of all those present. He there after was invited by the then Signals Brigade Commander Brig K. A. Gnanaweera to open the special Plaque mounted inside at the entrance to the Brigade HQ to mark the occasion. He once again stole the show when at a well-attended Guest Night held in the Signal Officer's Mess he spoke so eloquently mixing his speech with plenty of humour which kept all of us spellbound

In 1994 Major Perera handed over the Chairmanship to Maj Gen C J Abayaratne. From the very onset of office he showed his prowess of organizational and management skills in building a new Signals Association. The accounting systems were streamlined with Tony Wazir giving him the much-needed support. Both the General and Tony very judiciously placed monies in fixed deposits to ensure that we had an added income by way of interest. The General along with his able Vice Chairman WO 1 Nimmie Peiris streamlined the Poppy day collection mechanisms bringing in much needed assets to the Association. The drive to recruit and increase the membership was another facet which was vigorously pursued by General Abayaratna and his committee members.

Ties with the Signal Corps was enhanced and for the first time we witnessed Maj Gen Chula Seneviratne opening the doors for an yearly visit to the Regimental Centre as part of the Corps day celebrations. The first such visit took place in 2002 and a large number of members were felicitated to a function with lavish food and drinks, which included a stunt riding display. Gen Abayaratna maintained very close ties with the regulars and we took part in a very solemn ceremony to pay tribute to those signalers who had laid down their lives for the future of others.

Looking back over the last 25 years, the Association grew from strength to strength and it was able to offer assistance in several forms to our members who needed help. The annual get together held every year around December was an event everyone was proud of and looked forward to it as an





occasion to meet, enjoy and reminisce of the past. During these same years we had to bid a permanent farewell to some of our dearly beloved office bearers and members of the Association. It is not appropriate to list all the names but a few that come to mind are: Major M J F R Perera, Major Tudor Perera, Brig L J I Fernando, Col D S W Kuruppu, Capt (QM) A I Martil, WO1 J N Peiris etc. A full list of our beloved members who left us appear on another page.

The recent Tsunami that took place on 26 Dec 2004 devastated a major section of the island. However, we have not received any information that any of our members were severely affected. However, around seven regular signalers were very badly affected. Most of their belongings were washed away which included their dwelling houses. At a hurriedly convened special Annual General Meeting of the association Brig Piyal Abeysekera, Brigade commander made a well compiled presentation of the damage done to these signalers. It was decided to make a contribution towards rebuilding their lives. It is with great pleasure that we put on record that the members rose to the occasion and contributed lavishly towards a fund set up for this purpose. Mr Weerasisghe C D L C who was on holiday from the US made a huge contribution towards the fund and this set the trend among other members present. We were able to collect a very tidy sum, which was then handed over to the Regimental Center to build 7 houses for those signalers affected by the Tsunami.

The first anniversary of the Tsunami tragedy (Dec 2005) unfortunately coincided with the planned Golden Jubilee celebrations (1955-2005) to be held around this same period. We intentionally postponed our golden jubilee celebrations to July 2006.

The Association deeply appreciates the assistance and encouragement extended by Lt Gen Sarath Fonseka, the Commander of the Army who very kindly accepted our invitation to be the Chief Guest at the main celebrations. However, the tragic circumstances under which an attempt was made on his life by a suicide bomber made him indisposed for a long period. The Association also is very much grateful to Major General Nanda Mallawarachchi, the Acting Commander of the Army for kindly accepting our invitation to be the Chief Guest. We also express our grateful thanks to Maj Gen Sunil Silva Military Secretary, Brig T F Meedin the Signals Brigade commander, Brig E P de Z Abeysekera and other senior Signals Officers and other ranks who helped us through out this period to make this event a success. The role played by Brig F C J de Silva and Brig K A Gnanaweera in agreeing to help in several ways even though not in the committee has to be placed on record.

Finally we should thank the long standing committee members such as Capt J R Mendis, Capt S W Peiris, WO 11 D K Geetharatne, WO11 M I M Fausi and Tony Wazir who worked conscientiously throughout their entire tenure of office to ensure the association was alive and looked after the welfare of its members. Lt (QM) K T G de Silva (a member of the contingent to the coronation parade of 1952) was always at hand to provide guidance when required.



## Chairmen, Vice Chairmen Secretaries and Treasurers

### Chairmen

Col V C Kelaart	1955-1957
Col C R de Silva	1958-1966
Lt Col W E M Fernando	1967-1976
Maj M J F R Perera	1977-1982
Col A M M Fereed	1983-1988
Maj M R A T Perera	1989-1993
Maj Gen C J Abayaratne VSV USP	1994- to date

### Secretaries

Col D V Borhier	1955-1957
Mr. K I Ferdinando	1958-1963
Mr. A Joseph	1964-1966
Capt S L V A Perera	1967-1968
Capt A I Martil	1969
Mr S A J Samuel	1970
Mr J Nicholas	1971-1978
Mr N H J Dharmasena	1979
Mr W G Crusz	1980-1983
Mr D C Perera	1984-1998
Mr M I M Fausi	1999- to date

### Vice Chairmen

Col C R de Silva	1955-1957
Col V C Kelaart	1958
Col D V Brohier	1959-1960
Col B R Jesudason	1961-1963
Maj M J F R Perera	1964-1966
Brig L J I Fernando	1967-1972
Mr. B K Cooray	1973
Mr. Aelion H. Perera	1974-1975
Maj M J F R Perera	1976
Mr. B K Cooray	1977-1982
Lt Col A E Jeyasekera	1983
Lt M C de S A Wijenayake	1984-1986
Lt Col A E Jeyasekera	1987
Maj M R A T Perera	1988
Lt (QM) K T G T de Silva	1989-1993
Mr. J N Perera	1994-2004
Col A E T Perera	2005-to date

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Capt J E Fernando	1958
Major (QM) T K Passela	1959-1968
Capt J E Fernando	1969
Mr B S J Fernando	1970-1975
Mr. B K Cooray	1976
Mr S B de Silva	1977
Mr B K Cooray	1978
Mr C E Perera	1979
Lt (QM) K T G T de Silva	1980-1982
Maj M R A T Perera	1983-1987
Mr Tony Wazir (JP)	1988- to date



## General Committee Members

- ✦ Capt JR Mendis
- ✦ Capt SW Peiris
- ✦ Mr. DK Geetharatne
- ✦ Mr. ZC Yeheya
- ✦ Mr Hoursdon **(Deceased)**
- ✦ Mr RL Banduratne JP
- ✦ Mr NJ Wimelasena JP
- ✦ Mr Willy Wijesinghe
- ✦ Mr M Ariyasena
- ✦ Lt Col AA Perera RSP USP
- ✦ Brig KJN Senaweera RSP USP
- ✦ Brig WDN Premasiri
- ✦ Capt (QM) WL Perera USP
- ✦ Mr HR Chandrasena
- ✦ Mr R Sugathapala **(Deceased)**
- ✦ Mr BDS Hemachandra
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- ✦ Mr HM Hondamuni
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- ✦ Capt S Chandrapala
- ✦ Capt ED Dassanayake
- ✦ Lt (QM) AH Perera
- ✦ Mr KG Mettapala
- ✦ Mr K Ranaweera **(deceased)**
- ✦ Mr AG Goonatilake
- ✦ Mr WUDR Tennakoon
- ✦ Mr MS Sally **(deceased)**

### Life Members of the Sri Lanka Ex-Servicemen's Association

- ✦ Maj Gen CJ Abayaratne VSV USP
- ✦ Mr BSJ Fernando
- ✦ Mr DC Perera
- ✦ Lt (QM) KTG de Silva
- ✦ Mr Tony Wazir JP

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2006



Seated :

Capt JR Mendis, Asst Secretary - Mr MIM Fausi, Secretary - Major General C J Abayaratna VSV, USP, Chairman - Mr Tony Wazir JP - Treasurer - Capt (QM) WL Perera - Asst Treasurer

Standing

Lt MPNS Peris, Mr RL Banduratne, JP, Brigadier KJN Senaweera RSP USP, Capt SW Peiris, Lt Col AA Perera RSP USP, Mr DK Geetharatna



## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



Seated :  
Brig KJN Senawera RSP USP, Col KRP Rowel RWP USP, Brig EPdeZ Abeysekera USP, Brig KA Gnaweera,  
Maj Gen CJ Abayaratne VSV USP-Chairman, Brig FCJde Silva, Brig TF Meedin RSP, Lt Col CMDPL Chandrasekera, Col AET Perera,

Standig :  
Mr RL Bandurana, Mr MIM Fousi, Capt (QM) WL Perera, Capt SW Peris, Lt Col AA Perera RSP USP, Mr Tony Wazir JP,  
Mr DK Geetharatna, Lt(QM) KTGTde Silva  
Absent :- Col PGU Peiris



### Organising the Golden Jubilee Celebrations - The Epitome of Co-operation and Goodwill between the Golden Oldies and the Young Professionals of the Signal Corps

by  
**Maj Gen Chandra Abayaratna VSV USP JP**

The Signal Association was inaugurated on the 15th of December 1955 and thereby the Year of the Golden Jubilee was to be 2005. All plans were set for this but as fate would have it the Tsunami struck on the 26th of December 2004 and sent all our plans awry. We felt that a celebration of any kind was not in keeping with the mood of the Country and decided to call off all events planned for 2005 and instead direct all our resources and efforts to help the Tsunami affected. 7 shelters were built for servicemen who had lost their homes.

In 2006 the matter of celebrating the Golden Jubilee was again raised by some of the more enthusiastic committee members. It was in this back drop that we started planning for this great event. It was obvious that we did not have the resources to do it by ourselves. Hence a letter was addressed to all senior officers, both serving and retired, inviting them to a meeting with Executive Committee of the Association. The response was beyond all expectations. 6 serving officers including the Colonel Commandant of the Corps and 7 retired officers were present.

Maj Gen Sunil de Silva, Brig Piyal Abeysekera, Brig Fadyle Meedin, Col KRP Rowel, Col RA Kaduwela, Lt Col Prasanna Chandrasekera (serving officers) Maj Gen WJTK Fernando, Maj Gen AMCWB Seneviratne, Brig Frank de Silva, Brig KA Gnaweera, Col PGU Peiris, Col C Weeratunga and Lt(QM)KTGT de Silva (retired officers) all came forward to help us. If the response was beyond expectations, then their collective enthusiasm exceeded all limits.

The meeting got off to a great start with everyone coming up with suggestions and ideas. The form and the events that would constitute the celebration was discussed at length and agreement was reached. But there was the question of who should be the Chief Guest. Divergent views were expressed but the consensus of opinion was that it should be the Army Commander. Yet the question remained, will he be able to fit us into his busy schedule. The Army Commander confounded all critics when he asked but one question - how can I help you? and graciously accepted our invitation to be the chief guest. The question then arose as to what venue would satisfy all security requirements. Brig Meedin who is not easily fazed came up with a gem of a suggestion - come to Panagoda and we will take care of everything. Perhaps he did not realize that he was opening the flood gates! The question of finance was another worry point but all fears were soon allayed by many offers to obtain sponsorships etc. Brig Abeysekera started the ball rolling with the promise of a handsome contribution from one of his friends. Others followed suit.

Finally, whatever apprehensions or concerns there were quickly evaporated when the Yuppies (young up-market professional persons) gradually took charge of all the difficult operations with quiet efficiency. Lt Col Chandrasekera with the souvenir and the Raffle, Col Rowel with all the ground arrangements and Brig Meedin keeping a benevolent eye on all operations. His silent motto seemed to be - You decide, we'll execute.

Thank you SIGNALS! You are really great!!



## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 0900 Hrs | - Religious Ceremonies  |
| 0920 Hrs | - Laying of Wreaths at the monument   |
| 1000 Hrs | - <b>Arrival of Chief Guest</b>   |
| 1005 Hrs | - Guard of Honour to Chief Guest<br>by the Signal Regiments   |
| 1015 Hrs | - Tea   |
| 1100 Hrs | - Awards / Presentations Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Welcome Address by Chairman</li> <li>* Address by the Colonel Commandant</li> <li>* Awards for outstanding service</li> <li>* Address by the Chief Guest</li> <li>* Presentation of Plaques</li> <li>* Vote of Thanks</li> </ul> |
| 1230 Hrs | - Fellowship  |
| 1330 Hrs | - Lunch   |

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## REMINISCENCES OF MY DAYS IN THE CEYLON SIGNALS CORPS (VOLUNTEER FORCE)

by  
**Lt (QM) K T G T de Silva**

Encouraged and persuaded by Winston Crusz, my friend and colleague in the Postal, Department, I joined the Ceylon Signals Corps (Volunteer Force) in early 1951. The Commanding Officer of the Squadron was the late Col C R de Silva, E D The Adjutant was Capt DV Brohier of the Ceylon Signals Corps (Regulars), later to become Lt Col and Commanding Officer of the 1 Regt C S C (Regulars)

An event I'm very proud of and memories of which I will treasure throughout my life, is the PARADE held in England on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1953 to celebrate the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I had the privilege as a L/Cpl to be selected together with Sgm. Bakelmen L.L.S. to represent the Volunteer Signals at the Coronation. L/Cpl. Thevarsa represented 1 Sqn Signals, Lt.Col. Anton Muthukumaru flew to England while Major B.R. Heyn, Capt J.H.V. de Alwis of the Ceylon Engineers (V) and sqdn. Ldr. M.G. Wijeyanandran of the Royal Ceylon Air Force joined the other 34 from the Ceylon Army and 12 from the Royal Ceylon Air Force to proceed to England by the "Empire Trooper" Royal Ceylon Navy proceeded to England in their own ship "Vijaya" We took nearly 27 days while the Navy took 38 days to reach Southampton.

Lt. Col Anton Muthukumaru commanded the contingent while Major B.R. Heyn was the second in command. Major Sepala Attygale who was then attached to the Ceylon High Commission was the liaison officer. All these three officers commanded the Ceylon Army but regret to state that none of them are among the living. Prior to leaving for England we were trained for 14 days in Diyatalawa under R.S.M.I Baruk Cassim who was a well-known instructor.

On arrival, we were billeted at Pirbright where we received a further training by the renowned Grenadier Guards. The contingent was then moved to Kensington Gardens. We camped there along with other Commonwealth Troops and it was gratifying to see all Ranks including Generals living under canvas. Came June 2, 1953 and the Coronation Parade was on with the whole of England and especially London ablaze with jubilation and Merriment. The Queen in all her Regal Beauty and Splendour headed the parade riding in the Historical Royal Carriage on the way to Westminster Abbey, followed on foot by Thousands of Troops from the Commonwealth Countries among whom was the Ceylonese Contingent. The distance of the March was 16 miles.

Our dress was review order - blue beret, khaki shorts and tunic, white belt while garters, khaki hose-tops and black boots. June 2<sup>nd</sup> dawned and we were ready for marching 16... odd miles we got out of the huts with rain capes on and in the heavy showers we came to the marching point. Rains ceased for a while when one of the Army jeeps passed us saying that the weather will keep fine and ordered us to take the capes out and place them on the pavement. I do not think it could have passed half a mile





when it started raining worse than the rain we experienced as we took off. You could just imagine the suffering we underwent for two hours but it was a duty we had to perform as soldiers.

Another Unique Honour was given to Ceylon when personnel from our Contingent were chosen to do a Tour of Guard Duty at Buckingham palace, alongside the Grenadier Guards. This event was of special significance to the Ceylon Signals Corps (Volunteers) as Signallman L.L.S.Bakelaman, was one of the Guards on this Tour of Duty. The Ceylon Contingent had the privilege of being the Guests on board the H.M.S. Superb at Spithead when Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II was reviewing the Navies of the Commonwealth. The Hour of Greatest Glory for the Ceylon Signals was when the Three of us were presented to Princess Royal (the Queen's Aunt) who was the Honorary Colonel-Chief of the Royal Signals Corps. We were very unfortunate to have missed the Queen's Birthday Parade as we left for Ceylon earlier. Nevertheless, we were privileged to witness the rehearsal of this parade.

The highlights of the contingent's stay in London was the presentation of the coronation medals by her Majesty the Queen at the Buckingham Palace lawn on the morning of June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Her Majesty the Queen inspected the commonwealth troops and personally awarded Medals. The (next day) we were on board the ship "Supurb" to watch the Coronation Review at Spit-head. The Queen passed the ships in a boat. The next was when we were taken to witness the rehearsal of Her Majesty's Birthday Parade. A thousand strong troops on horseback took over the command from the officer commanding the parade on horseback.

On 19<sup>th</sup> June we had the occasion of witnessing the Royal Tournament which was an annual event. This Tournament is held for the entertainment of performers as well as spectators alike. The main purpose is to raise funds for the combined services charities, donation to many hospitals, Schools, Orphanages, Charitable institutions and Benevolent Societies directed through the war office, Admiralty and Air Ministry. According to the records this Tournament had originally started in 1880 and in 1952 a total of 50,000 pounds had been earned.

In 1962 for reasons beyond my comprehension the Ceylon Signals (Volunteers) along with two other Regts. were disbanded. With tears in our eyes as hard as rock and dissatisfaction expressed in minute silence, we broke up and went our different ways. A few along with me joined the 1 Regt. Ceylon National Guards, a new Regiment that was formed in 1962. I rose to the rank of Lieut (QM) in the Ceylon National Guards and was posted to the reserve in 1977-thus ending 26 years of Military Service. Late Lt.Col. A.E.Jayasekara commanded the 1/CNGin 1980.

We are now back together in the Signals Association of Sri Lanka. It gives me great pleasure to see my Colleagues and Comrades taking a very keen interest in the activities of the Association of which I was for some time the Hony. Treasurer, Vice Chairmen. Vice Patron and at present Co-Patron.



## START OF EW OPERATIONS IN SRI LANKA ARMY

by  
**Brig KA Gnanaweera (retd) USP TE, Dip Eng, MIEE, MImgt**  
**Regimental Commander/Brigade Commander - 1993**

### Introduction

EW, abbreviated for Electronic Warfare is yet another specialized operation like Nuclear and Chemical Warfare.

The basic rule of EW is to safeguard our own communications while hindering the enemy ability to use their own communications.

During the 2nd World War allied Forces adopted EW measures quite successfully in support of their ground, sea and air operations.

For the first time in the Sri Lanka army EW operations were launched during the Wadamarachchi campaign in 1987 against the terrorist groups operating in the North.

### EW Plan for Operation "Wadamarachchi"

After 1983, the terrorists groups were extensively using radio comms for their hit and run operations, logistics needs and even for remote controlled explosions. VHF and UHF equipment were used for short-range operations, camp defence and for remote controlled bomb blasts. They were operating a clandestine HF radio net connecting their main bases in the North and the East. Those bases that they were operating in India at that time too were linked to this net. They effectively used this channel of comms to pass their long but fully encrypted messages.

Having realized the gravity of using radio comms extensively by the terrorists groups, it was decided by the JOC (Joint Operations Command) HQ to start EW measures on full scale. Initially EW cells were established at main base camps in the North and they were mainly used for the collection of information of terrorist activities. New equipment of commercial type were procured from Japan by the JOC HQ. Bulk of the troops requirement came from the Army Signals while the other services and the STF helped sharing the initial need.

Maximum possible EW measures were planned and executed in support of the Wadamarachchi operations which was the first major military operation carried out by our armed forces against the terrorist groups. Wadamarachchi area in Jaffna peninsula was the hot bed of terrorist activities at that time.

The combined efforts of the three armed services, the police, the STF and few civil organizations such as SLBC, SLT(then Dept of Telecom) and Airport & Aviation Ltd. were fully utilized in order to achieve the success of EW operation. The Police and the Airport & Aviation Ltd. provided few of their sophisticated monitoring receivers. SLBC helped immensely by releasing some of their equipment and experts at Ekala & Seeduwa for jamming and monitoring purposes. The telex equipment obtained from the Telecom Dept were used to link JOC HQ in Colombo with Palaly where JOC forward HQ was established during the Wadamarachchi operation.

In army camps at Palaly and Elephantpass, two HF transmitters of 1 kW of power each were installed for jamming of enemy transmissions. A high powered TV transmitter also was installed with studio facilities at



Palaly by the JOC just before the commencement of the operation. This transmitter was used mainly for propaganda purposes. All these locations were linked over a special radio net for effective control and better coordination and this net too was manned by the signals.

Sharp at 'H' hour on 'D' Day i.e. 26 May 1987, EW operations (26 May to 11 June 1987) began as planned in support of major ground battle. Throughout the operation all enemy transmissions were monitored and jammed as planned causing total disruption to the terrorist comm links. The EW operation was so effective that the enemy just could not use their comms channels through out the operation. It had been reported even in some of the Indian newspapers that there was a complete black out on terrorists comm channels for many days. However whole Wadamarachchi operation was abruptly terminated on the face of its final victory when the Indian Govt intervened by dropping huge crates of food supplies from the cargo planes to few places in Jaffna peninsula

#### EW post "Wadamarachchi" Op.

Since then commanders realized the importance of EW measures and its impact on military operations. JOC established an EW committee consisting of signals chief/ their reps from the three services, the Police and the STF. Members from the other organizations such as SLBC, A&A and SLT also were co-opted as and when required to this committee for their advice & support. The main task of the committee was to advice the GOC on EW measures that should be adopted by the security forces in support of their military operations including intelligence gathering. At the same time army signals established its main coordinating EW cell at the SLBC building at Anuradhapura to continue its EW tasks (By this time SLBC had stopped medium wave broadcasts from Anuradhapura and the building was readily available to the Army)

EW operations were not limited to the North and the East. During the period of calamity in 1989/90 limited EW operations were launched to counter enemy electronic measures started in the South by the southern terrorism of JVP. Few EW cells were established in the South; at places like in Deniyaya and in Colombo. At Batalanda army camp 1 KW HF transmitter was installed and operated to jam mainly the enemy clandestine propaganda broadcasts. These EW operations were terminated soon after our military troops located and destroyed their bases and back bone thus restoring normalcy in the South.

#### Conclusion

First ever EW operation conducted in the Army with the limited resources available was a tremendous success. Signal Corps played a major role in this operation in addition to all the other signals tasks connected with the Wadamarachchi campaign.

EW operations both passive and active type covering ESM (Electronics support Measures), ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) and ECCM (Electronic Counter Measures) could be planned and executed to achieve higher degree of success in any major military operation

Today more and more sophisticated comm. systems are used in the armies world over. In parallel efficient SW tools combined with reliable HW are put into operation in EW environment.

### "සංඥා සංගමයේ සුභ කාඩක කටයුතු වලින් බිඳක්"

- අසන්නීපව, අසාධ්‍ය තත්වයේ පසුවන සාමාජික මහතන් සඳහා වෛද්‍ය ප්‍රතිකාර ලබා ගැනීමට මුදල් පරිත්‍යාග කිරීම
- සුනාමි ව්‍යසනයෙන් නිවාස අහිමිව විපත්ට පත් සංඥා බලකායේ සෙසු නිලයින් සඳහා නිවාස ඉදිකර දීම
- යුද හමුදා සේවා මුක්ත හට සංගමය මගින් පාලනය කරනු ලබන කටාන බෝලගල පිහිටි වැඩිහිටි නිවාසයේ නේවාසිකව සිටින විශ්‍රාමික හමුදා අයවරුන් සඳහා වාර්ෂිකව දිවා භෝජන සංග්‍රහයක් පවත්වා ඔවුන්ට තෑගියෙන් ප්‍රධානය කිරීම
- එම වැඩිහිටි නිවාසයේ ප්‍රයෝජනය සඳහා වර්ෂා රූපවාහිනී යන්ත්‍රයක් පරිත්‍යාග කිරීම.
- සංඥා බලකායේ 60 වන සංවත්සරය නිමිත්තෙන් පැවති දානමය පිංකම වෙනුවෙන් අට පිරිස 60 ක් පූජා කිරීම.
- සාමාජිකයින් සඳහා මරණාධාර අරමුදලක් ආරම්භ කිරීම.
- සාමාජිකයින් සහ ඔවුන්ගේ පවුල්වල අයවරුන් සඳහා සුභද්‍ර හමුවක් වාර්ෂිකව පැවැත්වීම

### GIFT OF A TV SET TO THE VETERANS HOME



Donation in memory of the late Mr JN Peiris by his son Dushyantha Peiris and his nephew Rumesh Ratnayake

### Annual Get together-2002



Donation of gifts to Children of Disabled Soldiers