

**ADDRESS BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL MARK PHILLIPS AT
THE GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE VETERANS DAY 2014**

Retired Chiefs of Staff MG McLean, MG Singh, RAdm Best, Col Carl Morgan, Col Lennox Wilson, Lt Col Gomes President of the Guyana Veterans Legion, Mr Kingsley Nelson, General Secretary of the Guyana Veterans Legion. Senior retired officers, senior serving officers, officers, Force Sergeant Major, other ranks, veterans, distinguish guests.

We the serving officers and Other Ranks of the GDF have gathered here this morning to honour all our veterans. The words of our monument read "to our fallen heroes and those who have served". On behalf of the all officers and other ranks I wish to thank you for your service to the Guyana Defence Force and to our Nation.

We are fully aware of the sacrifices, hardships, and inconveniences endured by you, our early officers and soldiers, as you made your contribution to the maintenance of law and order in Guyana and the preservation of our territorial integrity-especially during the Ankoko occupation, the Rupununi Rebellion, the New River intrusion, and the numerous patrolling of our land borders, our territorial sea and our Exclusive Economic Zone, and the more recent anti-crime patrols our urban and rural areas

You before us, have rendered exemplary service to our nation, safeguarding our patrimony. Whether you served in the Volunteer Force, the Special Service Unit playing an important role in our transition from colony to an independent state, whether you served in the Guyana People's Militia and the Guyana National Service, which were all vital components of our national security system, we do recognize your service today.

The leadership of the GDF remains aware of the challenging existence of many of our veterans. As Chief of Staff along with the senior leaders of the GDF, notwithstanding the prevailing and national security environment, we will continue our focus on the welfare issues of our veterans.

With the Government of Guyana providing for the operating costs of our Joint Services Veterans Home, I have ordered a substantial reduction in the monthly payments by its occupants, with the hope that this will make it attractive for other veterans in need of assisted living. This home remains a powerful example of what can be achieved through collaborative efforts of all, the Guyana Defence Force, the Government of Guyana and our Veterans organizations both local and overseas.

We have already identified the Legion Hall on Carifesta Avenue for refurbishment during our 50th Anniversary in 2015. The Guyana Defence Force will continue to embrace and support the work of the Guyana Veterans Legion as we usher in our 50th Anniversary activities, which will involve your participation and the execution of projects focusing on improving the welfare of our Veterans.

May we all continue to reminisce on our service to the GDF and to our Nation. Thank you.

Brigadier Mark Phillips