

BRIGADIER GENERAL KEVIN MOONSAMY

By VINESH SELVAN

BRIGADIER GENERAL KEVIN MOONSAMY – SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE



(Author)

INTRODUCTION

The South Africa Air Force's transition into democracy from a predominantly white institution to one of a multicultural organisation post democracy, gave many previously disadvantaged members the opportunity for career progression in aviation and military sectors. One of the notable career paths is one of Brigadier General (Brig Gen) Kevin Moonsamy, MMM, psc(j), SDSP.

CHILDHOOD

General Moonsamy is a fourth generation descendant of the Indian labourers brought to work on the sugar plantations in the Port of Natal by the British in 1860. Born in Westbrook on the Sugarcane Estate of Mt Edgecombe to Mr. and Mrs. Pillay, the family was forced in 1983 to relocate to Phoenix. The difference in surname has been problematic status quo within the Indian community with many families losing their original surname through child birth registration. General Moonsamy matriculated at Earlington Secondary School in 1985 to the north of Durban in Kwa Zulu Natal.

EARLY MILITARY CAREER

The General enlisted in the South African Navy as apartheid restrictions hindered many Indians from joining other arms of service. The Naval programme to enlist Indians into the SAS Jalsena Corps seem to be the only viable option and in 1987, General Moonsamy took his first step into the start of his military career. In 1989, a career opportunity to change arm of Service presented itself and he subsequently transferred into the South African Air Force into the 508 Protection Squadron. In 1996, General Moonsamy became the first drill and physical training Instructor of Indian descendant within the South African Air Force and was immediately accepted on Officer's formation course at SA Air Force College. On completion of the Officer's formation course, he was awarded the prestigious Officership trophy and in 1997, appointed as a training officer at SA Air Force Gymnasium with the rank of Lieutenant.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

Brig Gen Moonsamy was awarded the Military Merit Medal in 1999 for outstanding service to the South African National Defence Force and country. In 2000, he was appointed as the Commanding Officer of 508 Squadron, at Air Force Base Durban with the management of base security.

General Moonsamy attended a Military Assistance training programme in Canada for a year in 2003 and completed 4 years as a staff officer at Directorate Operational Support & Intelligence Systems managing all security operations and performed various Military Liaison Officer Duties for the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. He travelled internationally in pursuit of enhancing military co-operation between South Africa and other countries including countries affected by war like Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS

In 2006, he completed his Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme at the South African National War College and received the award for the best Command Research Paper from a SA Air Force student. Brig Gen Moonsamy was then appointed as the Chief Instructor at the SA Air Force College from Jan 2008 till Dec 2010 and was entrusted with shaping future officers. On 01 Jan 2011, he was appointed as the first Indian Officer Commanding of the SA Air Force Gymnasium managing the development of aspiring new recruits to the South African Air Force. He attended the Security & Defence Studies Programme in 2015 at the South African National Defence College.

On 01 January 2017, he was promoted to Brigadier General with appointed as Director Education Training and Development, managing all developmental training, engineer studies, technical training, tertiary studies, pupil pilot and navigator training within the South African Air Force. Brig Gen Moonsamy is currently the only serving General of Indian descent in the SA Air Force. General Moonsamy together with his wife Janessa, a Warrant officer Class 1 (WO1) in the Air Force in the Logistical field, will take up their new posting of Defence Advisor (DA) in the Republic of India with effect from 01 May 2022 for a period of four years. This marks a historic moment as Gen Moonsamy will be the first officer of Indian descent from the South African Air Force to be deployed to India as a Defence Advisor. His core focus as a DA will be to pursue and protect the national interests of the Republic of South Africa, advance military co-operation between the Republic of India and the Republic of South Africa and to market brand South Africa to India and the world.

Brig Gen Moonsamy obtained various tertiary qualifications during his outstanding service of 35 years to the South African National Defence Force and his country. The most memorable moment in his career was when he had the opportunity to spent time with His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela (Madiba). His moral compass is his wife WO1 Janessa Moonsamy and their two children, Corporal Sven Moonsamy also a serving member of the South African Air Force and their daughter Serenell Moonsamy.

His motto in life is...

“Do the right things right on the most difficult day even when nobody is looking and make a difference to those coming after us - Brig Gen Kevin Moonsamy”

