



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
DEFENCE



**COLONEL VASANTH VENUGOPAL, AC, VSM**

<b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>	IC-48714
<b>RANK</b>	Colonel
<b>NAME</b>	Vasanth Venugopal
<b>SON OF</b>	Mr NK Venugopal
<b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE</b>	Bengaluru, Karnataka
<b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>	9 MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY
<b>SERVICE</b>	Indian Army
<b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/COMMISSION</b>	10 June 1989
<b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>	Ashoka Chakra (Posthumous)/ 31 July 2007
<b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>	
<b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>	Vashisht Sena Medal- 2007



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Colonel Vasanth Venugopal was born on 25 March 1967 in Bangalore, Karnataka. His parents were Mrs Praphulla and Mr NK Venugopal. His father worked with Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) hence his work required the family to travel throughout the state of Karnataka. Due to his father's transferable job, he studied in a number of schools in various places including Udupi, Shimoga and Bangalore. He graduated from MES College, Bangalore in 1988. As a student Colonel Vasanth, was brilliant in academics and a very good athlete. During his graduation days, he was a member of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), through which he participated in the Indo-Canada World Youth Exchange Program of 1986-87.



*Colonel Vasanth Venugopal at a border post*  
(Source: Honourpoint)

In the year 1988, Colonel Vasanth Venugopal joined the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun and on 10 June 1989, he was commissioned into 9 MARATHA LI. In a military career spanning over eighteen years, he served in Pathankot, Sikkim, Gandhinagar, Ranchi, Bangalore and various sectors of Jammu and Kashmir "I go where my men go", he told his mother when she asked him if a Colonel should participate in all operations conducted by his



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men. On 28 October 2006, he took over as Commanding Officer of 9 MARATHA LI and the Battalion was at that time deployed in Uri Sector of Jammu and Kashmir.



*Wife of Late Colonel Vasanth Venugopal receiving Ashoka Chakra from then President Mrs Pratibha Patil.*

(Source: Vasanthratna Foundation for Arts)

The MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY was formed as the 103rd Mahrattas in 1768, making it the senior most Light Infantry Regiment of the Army. Their Regimental Centre has been Belgaum, Karnataka, since 1922. The battle cry of the MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY is, 'Bol Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai!' (Cry Victory to Emperor Shivaji!) in tribute to the Maratha Emperor Shivaji. Indian independence saw the Regiment reverting to the original five battalions, with the 3 MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY converting to the airborne role and becoming 2 PARA in April 1952. With the integration of the erstwhile Princely States, the 19th, 20th, 22nd battalions were amalgamated, from the State Forces of Kolhapur, Baroda, and Hyderabad, with the Regiment. The expansion of the Indian Army to meet the omnipresent threat to its borders has seen the Regiment grow to its present total of 18 battalions and two



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TA battalions whilst the period also saw the conversion of 21st Bn into 21 Para (Special Forces) and the 115 Infantry battalion (TA) being grouped under the MAHAR Regiment. The five Mahavir Chakras and the numerous other war and peace time gallantry awards bear testimony to the front-line leadership and courage of the Regiment's Officers, JCOs and NCOs. The regiment has also given Indian Army its 21<sup>st</sup> Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Joginder Jaswant Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC who held the position from February 2005 to August 2007.



*Colonel Vasanth Venugopal at his Office.*  
(Source: Honourpoint)

On 31 July 2007, Colonel Vasanth Venugopal was commanding the 9 MARATHA LI, deployed along the Line of Control in the Uri Sector of Jammu & Kashmir as part of the Counter-Insurgency Operations. He was informed about a group of insurgents who had infiltrated across the Line of Control. He personally took command of a body of troops and led a pre-dawn offensive against the terrorists. Anticipating that the insurgents would try and escape back across the Line of Control, Colonel Venugopal displaying determined and resolute leadership, deftly organized his troops to block the avenues of escape. Taking advantage of dense foliage, terrorists tried to evade by hiding in the jungle. Colonel Venugopal, leading his troops from the front, engaged the terrorists in a fierce fire fight closing in on the terrorist. This exhausting engagement went on throughout the entire day and night but succeeded in foiling all attempts by the terrorists to make good their escape using cover of darkness and foliage in the night. At daybreak on 31 July 2007, Colonel Venugopal, wanting to take advantage of the first light, rallied his men and personally led the operation to flush out the terrorists who had managed to occupy dominating position. Outflanking them, Colonel Vasanth engaged the



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terrorists from close quarters, killing one of them. However, he himself was injured in this action.

Unmindful of his injuries, he exhorted his men to block all escape routes and killed two more terrorists before succumbing to his wounds. A total of eight militants were killed in this operation by his troops.

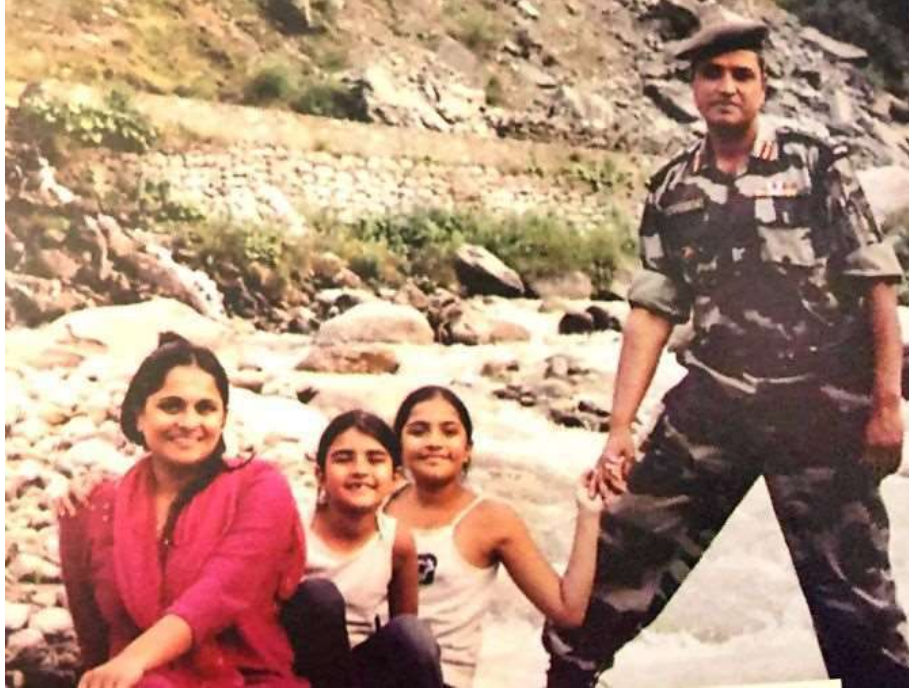


*Col Vasant Venugopal, second from right, greets Defence Minister A K Antony*  
(Source: Honourpoint)

Earlier in the same general area, he had led an operation from 27 to 30 June 2007 in which his battalion had eliminated four terrorists. A brave leader of men and a recipient of the Vishisht Seva Medal, Colonel Vasanth Venugopal led from the front in the true spirit of the Army and was honoured with the Ashoka Chakra posthumously.



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*The family spent their last summer together in Kashmir where Colonel Vasanth was posted.  
He was killed in action a couple of months later.*

(Source: <https://www.rediff.com/news/special/an-actress-remembers-her-father-the-ashok-chakra-hero/20200130.htm>)

He is survived by his wife, two daughters Rukmini, Yeshodha and parents. The award was received by his wife, Subhashini Vasanth: The Army has named a residential complex in Bangalore as Colonel Vasanth Venugopal Enclave. In addition, the Testing Hall at the Selection Centre (South) in Bangalore has been re-named after him. Subhashini Vasanth, a Bharatnatyam dancer, has set up a foundation named Vasantharatna dedicated to her husband Colonel Vasanth Venugopal. The foundation promotes dedicated to Colonel Vasanth Venugopal with family the widows of martyrs.



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## CITATION

IC-48714 COLONEL VASANTH VENUGOPAL, 9 MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY  
(POSTHUMOUS)  
(Effective date of award-31 July 2007)

Colonel Vasanth Venugopal was commanding a Battalion deployed on the Line of Control in rugged and inaccessible terrain in Uri Sector in J&K.

On 30 July 2007, on receiving information of infiltration of terrorists from across the Line of Control, Colonel Vasanth Venugopal personally took command of a body of troops, moved swiftly and intercepted the infiltrating group of terrorists who were attempting to escape back across the Line of Control on being detected. Anticipating this move, Colonel Venugopal displaying determined and resolute leadership, deftly organized his troops to block the avenues of escape. Taking advantage of dense foliage, terrorists tried to evade by hiding in the jungle. Colonel Venugopal, leading his troops from the front, engaged the terrorists in a fierce fire fight closing in on the terrorist. This exhausting engagement went on throughout the entire day and night but succeeded in foiling all attempts by the terrorists to make good their escape using cover of darkness and foliage in the night. At daybreak on 31 July 2007, Colonel Venugopal, wanting to take advantage of the first light, rallied his men and personally led the operation to flush out the terrorists who had managed to occupy dominating position. Outflanking the terrorist location, Colonel Venugopal, engaged the terrorists from close quarter killing one terrorist but was himself injured. Unmindful of his injury and bleeding profusely he exhorted his men to block all escape routes and killed another terrorist trying to escape. In the meanwhile, a terrorist fired a burst, which hit Colonel Venugopal. Mustering the last reserves of energy, in a daring act before losing consciousness, Colonel Venugopal fired at the terrorist and killed him. However, he later succumbed to his injuries and made the supreme sacrifice for the mother land.

Colonel Vasanth Venugopal, thus, displayed outstanding bravery, courage and resolute leadership resulted in determined perseverance by his men to eliminate the complete group of eight foreign terrorists.

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No ..... dated .....



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<https://www.vasantharatna.org/col-vasanth>
7. My father taught me that patriotism is not limited to overt gestures: Rukmini Vasanth(Accessed on 10 June 2024)  
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/kannada/movies/news/my-father-taught-me-that-patriotism-is-not-limited-to-overt-gestures-rukmini-vasanth/articleshow/102719286.cms>





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## MEMORIALS

- A Bust statue Of Colonel Vasanth Venugopal At Army Selection Center (South) Bangalore.



Mother Of Late Colonel Vasanth Venugopal Garlands the Statue of her son.  
(Source: X @Navyspokesperson)



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## VIDEOS

Col Vasanth Venugopal (Source: YouTube Popsi Narasimhan)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZEOAI8kgzM>

Col Vasanth Venugopal AC | Indian Army | Real Story | Uri Operation 31 July 2007 | In Hindi (Source: YouTube Shivalik Journal)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvAqcnZIJXk>

Col. Vasanth Venugopal (Ashok chakra) (Source: YouTube Brothers in Arms)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oUxowmsY5w>

Soldier's widow helps families of martyrs. (Source: YouTube NDTV)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1XFsmFG5rA>

Amazing Indians Awards 2014 - Part 6 (Source: YouTube TimesNow)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37dWIV-9pjc>

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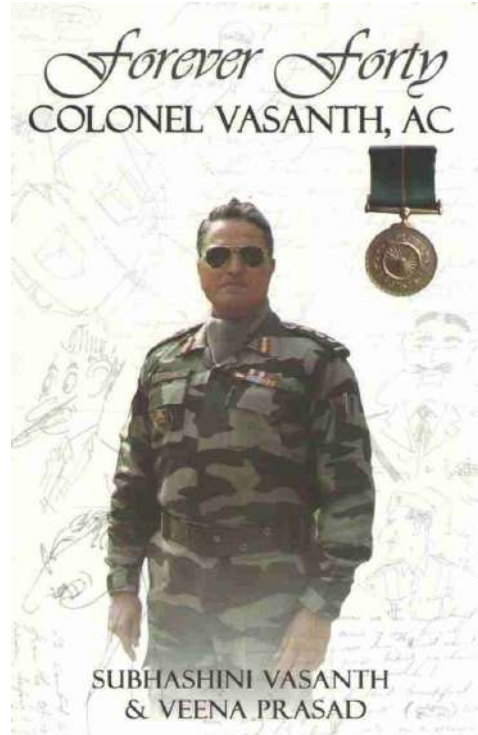
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## OTHER INTERSTING RESOURCES <sup>2</sup>

- Colonel Vasanth Venugopal's Wife Mrs Subhashini Venugopal and his cousin Veena Prasad published his biography called 'Forever Forty'



(Source: Flipkart)

- Bangalore Mirror published an article on Col Vasanth Venugopal, “An officer, gentleman & 40 forever” by Jayanthi Madhukar  
<https://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/opinion/sunday-read/an-officer-gentleman-40-forever/articleshow/21562188.cms>

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