

ORBITUARY NOTE

**IN MEMORIAM LIEUTENANT COLONEL PROFESSOR AHMAD
GHAZALI ABU HASSAN (1956-2022)[©] ^Σ**

TEH YIK KOON^{*}, ARUNA DEVI GOPINANTH[†], AND ARIFFIN S.M OMAR[‡]

ABSTRACT

In this obituary note, we dedicate our thoughts to the late Lieutenant Colonel Professor Ahmad Ghazali Abu Hassan (1956-2022), who recently passed away. His demise in December 2022 is a great loss to the nation and the academia, especially in the Defence and Strategic Studies. To many of us who believed in him, we know he cared for all irrespective of race, creed, or religion. Every footprint he has left behind becomes an imprint in our lives. His memory will live on in the hearts and minds of his friends, colleagues, students, and all those he had inspired. May his soul rest in peace.

Keywords: obituary, Ahmad Ghazali Abu Hassan, first dean, Faculty of Defence and Management Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia

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NOTA ORBITUARI**MENGENANG ALLAHYARHAM LEFTENAN KOLONEL PROFESOR
AHMAD GHAZALI ABU HASSAN (1956-2022)**

TEH YIK KOON, ARUNA DEVI GOPINANTH, AND ARIFFIN S. M. OMAR

ABSTRAK

Dalam nota obituari ini, kami mendedikasikan kenangan kami buat Allahyarham Leftenan Kolonel Profesor Ahmad Ghazali Abu Hassan (1956-2022), yang telah meninggal dunia. Pemergiannya pada Disember 2022 adalah satu kehilangan besar kepada negara dan dunia akademik, khususnya dalam Pengajian Pertahanan dan Strategik. Bagi kebanyakan kita yang mengenal beliau tahu Allahyarham begitu mengambil berat terhadap semua orang, tanpa mengira latar kaum, agama serta kepercayaan. Legasi yang ditinggalkannya menjadi jejak pembakar semangat hidup kita. Semoga ingatan Allahyarham akan terus hidup dalam hati dan pemikiran sahabat andai, rakan sekerja, pelajar dan semua yang telah diilhamkan. Semoga rohnya tenang.

Kata Kunci: *obituari, Ahmad Ghazali Abu Hassan, dekan pertama, Fakulti Pengajian Pengurusan dan Pertahanan, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia*

Introduction

Ahmad Ghazali Abu Hassan held a Master of Law degree from University of Lancaster United Kingdom (awarded with distinction) and Master of Science in Defence Studies from University of Madras India (awarded Class A). He had also completed the course in International Security Program for Senior Executives at John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, in November-December 2014.

His military career started when he was a student at the Royal Military College. Commissioned in 1976, he served the Malaysian Army for twenty-five years where he held various command, staff and teaching appointments such as tactics instructor at Army Combat Training Centre (PULADA), military observer at the United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) and UNIKOM Deputy Chief Liaison Officer in Baghdad. He was also a qualified training development officer trained in training needs analysis, training design, training implementation and evaluation. His last appointment was the Commandant of the Royal Military College.

In 2000, he joined Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) as a lecturer in International Law and International Relations. At UUM, he held various administrative posts such as head of the Department of Strategic Studies and deputy dean of the Faculty of International Studies. He was also a Fulbright Scholar after joining the academia.

In 2006, he was appointed to be in the team to establish Malaysia's National Defence University which he subsequently joined in 2007 as the inaugural Dean of Faculty of Defence Studies and Management. In 2009, he was appointed to be the first Director for the Centre for Defence and International Security Studies (CDISS). He served in that position until August 2017.

His academic areas of specialisation were Defence and Security Studies, and International Law specializing in the Law of the Sea and Laws of Armed Conflict.

Ahmad Ghazali was a professor at the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia until April 2018.

Throughout his academic career that spanned nineteen years, apart from having taught undergraduate classes, he had also supervised or examined four PhD students and more than fifty master's students.

He was regularly consulted by relevant government and private agencies, as well as the press on areas related to his expertise and was involved in a number of research on national security; the latest was on Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) for the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2017. In 2018, he was invited to contribute to the preparation of Malaysia's Defence White Paper where he wrote on five different topics on key issues of concern to National Defence.

Ahmad Ghazali had also been regularly invited to give talks and presentations both within and outside the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). His overseas recognition includes being appointed to the editorial board of Islamabad Policy Research Institute Journal, Pakistan; Steering Committee Member of Shanghai Institute of International Studies, China; and external PhD examiner by University of Adelaide, Australia. He was also invited to speak at the prestigious Shanghai Forum in 2016. At ASEAN level, he was one of the senior founding members of Network of ASEAN Defence Institutes (NADI) which he actively participated since 2007. His knowledge and expertise speak for itself at the NADI conferences. The military has always praised him for his excellent proposals geared towards bringing a harmonious relationship within the ASEAN region.

Ahmad Ghazali was truly one of a kind. He had excelled both in the military and academia. Despite his rigorous military training, Ahmad Ghazali was a gentleman who was kind, gentle and well-mannered, and who never abused his position in any way. In the academia, his students revered him as a dedicated and committed teacher due his mild manners as well as his seriousness in imparting knowledge to them. He was a well-respected scholar and an inspiration to many academic colleagues because of his willingness to help and guide them with his vast knowledge in International and Strategic studies. As a researcher, educator, and policy maker, he strived towards a disciplined responsibility at making education a purposeful citadel. His thoughts and manifestations will go down as a functional mechanism for the University.

To his friends, his friendship was most valued because of his sincerity and honesty for what he stood. He would stand by them if and when they were dealt with unjustly through thick and thin no matter what it cost him. The great words of civil rights leader, Martin Luther King - "Leadership not in love with money, but in love with justice; Not in love with publicity, but in love with humanity" - which were imbibed in Ahmad Ghazali made him stand apart from several others who served in the University. Money and publicity did not appear to be in his favour, but it was excellence he believed in. He was a man of integrity and he never compromised on his principles, and this made him a rare individual among the many people we have met. We will always remember him as a loyal comrade who stood up for those who were oppressed and treated unjustly. Sadly, his loyalty to friends and his sacrifices for them were not reciprocated by those whom he helped at some cost to himself. We should know as we were there.

His demise in December 2022 is a great loss to the nation and the academia. To many of us who believed in him, we know he cared for all irrespective of race, creed or religion. Every footprint he has left behind becomes an imprint in our lives. Ahmad Ghazali was a man who never lost a friend and never made an enemy. His memory will live on in the hearts and minds of his friends, colleagues, students, and all those he had inspired. May his soul rest in peace.

Acknowledgment and Declaration

Teh and Ariffin first met Ahmad Ghazali when they were teaching at Universiti Utara Malaysia in Sintok, Kedah. They continued to be colleagues when they joined the National Defence University in Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur. Aruna then became their colleague when she joined the National Defence University. The Authors would like to show their gratitude to SINERGI's editorial board for the opportunity to publish this obituary note.