

General José Nunes da Fonseca

Chief of Defence – Portugal



General José Nunes da Fonseca was born in Mafra, in 1961, and entered the Military Academy in 1979.

He holds a degree in Military Sciences (Engineering) and a Master's degree in Military Engineering from the Military Academy. He attended several courses, namely the NBC Defense and Irregular Operations courses, the Routes of Communication Course (Academia de Ingenieros, Spain, 1990/91), the General Staff Course and the Joint Staff Internship, the Peace Support Operations Course, the SIACCON Command and Control System Course (Italy, 1997), the Civil Emergency Planning Course and the NATO Senior Officers Policy Course (NATO School, 2012). He has been a member of the Order of Engineers since 1986.

Throughout his career, he served in various units of the Army and of the Armed Forces. At the Practical School of Engineering (EPE) (1986-87), he was an Instructor and Deputy Company Commander. Then, at the 1st Engineering Regiment (1987-92), he was a Company Commander. After that, back at the EPE (1992-93), he was an instructor, a Course Director and a Company Commander. Later, in the Army Staff (1994-95), he served as an advisor in the Logistics Division. In the Cabinet of the Chief of Staff of the Army (1999-02), he was an advisor for General Affairs and an advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Army. Back to the EPE (2002-04), he was the Director of Education and Training and the Deputy Commander. Back to the Cabinet of the Chief of Staff of the Army (2004-05), he served as an advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Army, once again. As a Colonel, he was appointed Commander of the

Practical School of Engineering (2005- 07), Chief of Staff of the General Commander of the Army Logistics (2007-09), and he attended the Flag Officer Course (2009/10).

Abroad, he served in EUROFOR (Florence / Italy, 1995-99), as an officer in the Operations and Logistics Section and as Head of the Operational Procedures Section of the Operations Division. As Brigadier General, he was the Director of the Joint Logistics Support Group, at the NATO Allied Force Command (Madrid/Spain, 2010-13).

He carried out two tours of duty in NATO operations. The first in SFOR (NATO Stabilization Force), in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1998/99, as Operations Officer at the Headquarters of the Multinational Southeast Division; The second in KFOR (NATO Force in Kosovo), in the first semester of 2011, as the General-Commander of the Logistics Force (Joint Logistics Support Group) of this operation.

Assigned to the National Republican Guard, from January 2013 to October 2018, he served as Commander of the Coastal Control Unit, from 2013 to 2017, as an Inspector, from 2017 to 2018, and as Deputy Commander.

In October 2018, he was appointed as Chief of Staff of the Army, a position he held until his appointment as Chief of the General Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces on March 1, 2023.

General Fonseca has been awarded 25 national commendations and 3 from foreign entities: 3 by the Minister of Defence, 2 by the Chief of the General Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, 5 by the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army and 15 by other Flag Officers.

His military decorations include: the Military Order of Avis in the classes of Grand Officer (2014) and Officer (2002); 6 Distinguished Services Medals (Gold, 2023, and Silver, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2013), 1 Gold Medal for Distinguished Public Security Services (2017), Military Merit Medals (1st, 2nd and 3rd classes), the National Defense Medal (1st class, 2020), the D. Afonso Henriques Medal (1st class, 2012) and the Exemplary Behavior Medals (Gold and Silver).

He was also awarded: the Commemorative Medals of Special Services Commissions "Italy 1995-96", "Italy 1996-99", "Bosnia 1998-99", "Kosovo 2011" and "Spain 2010-2013"; the Silver Cross of the Order of Merit of the Guardia Civil (Spain, 2016), the Marshal Hermes Medal (Brazil, 2004), the EUROFOR (2003), the NATO/SFOR (2000), the French Commemorative Medal (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1998-99), the NATO /Operation in the Balkans (2011), the Commemorative Cross for the Military Mission for Peace in Kosovo (Italy, 2011), the National Order of the Legion of Honor (Officer class, France, 2020), the Order of Military Merit (Grand Officer class, Brazil, 2022), and the Grand Cross of Military Merit (White Badge, Spain, 2022). He is married and has two daughters.