

## “HEROES”

Fernando Salgueiro Maia was a "captain of April", a member of the Movement of the Armed Forces (*MFA*), who commanded the military column, which leaving the Practical Cavalry School of Santarém in the early hours of April 25, 1974, marched over Lisbon. He was the protagonist of the decisive victory of the revolting military; he became the symbol of the revolution. He occupied *Terreiro do Paço* and commanded the siege of *Carmo* barracks, where the main figures of the dictatorial regime were, including Marcelo Caetano. A military man of merit, he was recognized for his integrity and courage after his death. He studied at *Colégio Nun'Álvares*, in Tomar, and at *Liceu Nacional de Leiria*. In 1964, he entered the Military Academy and, in 1966, he entered the Practical Cavalry School of Santarém. Like so many men of his generation, he fought the colonial war in Africa, in Guinean and Mozambican territory. Graduated captain, he integrated the *MFA* in the preparation and execution of the “Operation End of Regime”, being an active member of the movement's assembly after the 25th of April. He did not accept political positions at the end of the revolution and ended up dying of cancer. After his death, the writer Fernando Assis Pacheco said: "He shouldn't have died of any cancer, but standing, struck by lightning".

**“What is it to be a Hero?”** A hero is someone who by his actions inspires others to be better people, he is someone who acts in a crisis situation not to be recognized, not to be rewarded but because he can help, and because the action needs to be taken. To me, a hero isn't someone who was a good boxer, or a sports star who was very good at his job. Being good at something or famous or rich does not make you a hero. It is easy to give money if you are rich. But giving ourselves is another matter. Heroes are made of humble stuff. They are people who don't care about notoriety or credit. They are people who defend themselves on behalf of others, unselfishly giving their time, sweat and tears into simply helping someone else. Or those who will risk their own life to help you live another day. And then walk away after they know you are alright. Or the ultimate hero who gives his life so others may live. Or in parts of the world where people are starving when someone gives what little food or medicine they may have so a child can live. These are things that I think of when one uses the term hero. These qualities are manifest in all levels of society and there are far more of them than we know, because that's how they want it. Every person in this world can be a hero, you just need to be a better person and follow your heart.

**What is it to be a hero?** It is to be like Salgueiro Maia, don't be afraid of others, change the world for the better and be brave.

**By Beatriz Salgado**