Ari Dirceu Fernandes Júnior

1986 – 2010

Third Sergeant Ari Dirceu Fernandes Júnior, a national of Brazil, was deployed to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for six months.

Prior to that Ari was a Corporal in the 2nd Battalion of Light Infantry, based in Santos, São Paulo. Growing up, relatives said he dreamed of pursuing an army career and had enlisted in 2004 at the age of 18.

One of his roommates described him as "an adventurous, lively and friendly person with a passion for videogames. He was a great individual, playful, and a true professional," he said.

"He loved life, he loved Brazil and he was very happy with what he did. He lived every second with great intensity, he traveled and enjoyed his life to the fullest," said a friend.

"Ari performed his duties and he is a hero for our family, for São Vicente, and for the country," said his partner, Vanessa, who added that Ari was planning to return to Brazil soon to celebrate his 24th birthday.

"He did so much at such a young age. He was a hero. My brother was a friend and a responsible person," said an older brother.

A ceremony was held on 22 January at the Brasilia Air Base to honour Ari and his fallen colleagues, which was attended by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and First Lady Marisa Letícia. President Lula called their work with MINUSTAH "the noblest humanitarian mission ever carried out by the Brazilian Armed Forces."

Ari and his colleagues posthumously received a promotion and the Peacemaker Medal from their country for outstanding acts of courage and bravery under life-threatening circumstances.

Prior to his funeral at the Cathedral of Santos, the procession passed in front of the headquarters of the battalion Ari had served.

Ari is survived by his three-year-old daughter and his partner Vanessa Aubin.

These tributes were prepared based on information gathered from a number of sources, both within and outside the United Nations. They were drafted in the weeks that followed the Haiti earthquake of 12 January 2010, in order to pay tribute to UN personnel who were killed. The tributes were intended for an internal audience of UN staff, and as such were published on the UN Secretariat's intranet called iSeek. As a courtesy to family members and friends of the victims, and at the request of several UN Member States, they are republished in their entirety on this public page. They are not intended to be, nor should they be construed as, an official record of the United Nations. They should not be attributed any official status as to documenting the situation of the individuals mentioned or not mentioned.