



Douglas Pedrotti Neckel

1986 – 2010

Third Sergeant Douglas Pedrotti Neckel, a national of Brazil, was deployed to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) since July 2009.

Born in Cruz Alta, south Brazil, Douglas had a lifelong dream to join the military. Growing up, he and a childhood friend would practice marching in his family's backyard.

"The army was his life, it was what he thought about 24 hours a day," recalled a family member. "We would tease him about it. Every time he watched a movie, it had to do with the army."

Douglas was a member of the 5th Light Infantry Battalion of Lorena where he had lived for the past 14 years.

Friends said he was drawn to the armed forces because he felt compelled to help others and often did so in his everyday life.

Working on a peacekeeping mission was a natural fit. Said a family member, "He wanted to help the Haitian people – people that he only knew through the news – but that he knew had the hardest life on the continent."

Last fall, on a trip home to Brazil, Douglas reported having felt a renewed perspective on the world. "You have no idea what a lack of something will make people do," he told his family.

"He was so happy. He said he had learned how to better recognize the value of water and food. He also said he wanted to protect these people," said his cousin.

Just two hours before the earthquake, Douglas told his family how much he was looking forward to returning home the following Sunday.

While he enjoyed the Army, he was considering studying economics and helping his parents in their family business.

He died guarding a standpoint in Port-au-Prince.

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

Douglas 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.

At the service, his family wore shirts displaying images of Douglas. His coffin was covered with the Brazilian flag and the words "Mission Accomplished."

An online profile he wrote himself reads: "Learn from your mistakes, cultivate the love from friendship, make someone else happy at least once per day, think less of yourself, look around and try to help others, be less serious, laugh more and help those in need."

Douglas is survived by his family in Brazil.