



João Eliseu Souza Zanin

1963 – 2010

Major General João Eliseu Souza Zanin, a national of Brazil, was in Haiti on a short assignment as a National Investigation Officer in cooperation with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). He arrived in Haiti the day before the earthquake struck.

João Eliseu was born and raised in Mirassol, São Paulo State. He left home at the age of 15 to attend high school in Campinas. He then entered the Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras, located in Resende, Rio de Janeiro, where friends remember him saying, "I plan to be a general."

Some of the highlights of his career include serving as Deputy Commander for the 26th Field Artillery Group in Campanha and serving as the commander for the 15th Field Artillery Group in Lapa. He also worked in the cabinet of the Brazilian Army Commander.

He also served as an instructor at a preparatory school for army cadets in Campinas, São Paulo.

Although he could have retired with his 30 years of military service, he loved his career so much that he accepted

the invitation to travel to Haiti for two months to ensure the smooth rotation of Brazilian troops which normally rotate in and out of the country at six month intervals.

The news of his death saddened his former colleagues, one of whom said, "He was an exemplary professional, very good and very competent. This is a loss for the Army."

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

João Eliseu and his Brazilian colleagues received posthumously a promotion and the Peacemaker Medal for outstanding acts of courage and bravery under life-threatening circumstances.

João Eliseu is survived by his wife Cely, his daughter Camille, 18, his son Thiago, 16, his father Eliseu, and his brothers Fabio and Fernando.