

JONATHAN CHURCH



Trooper Jonathan Church was a member of the Special Air services. In 1994 and 95 he was sent to Rwanda to provide medical aid to the sick and injured. The force were armed but were not allowed to use their weapons to help anyone but themselves. They saw the disturbing massacre of thousands of people but they saved hundreds of lives. Some individuals were able to rescue victims, but could only do this at a risk, like Jon church.

When all the Australians were leaving Kibeho for the night, Jon saw a crying girl and rescued her. Another medic bandaged her arm to make it look as though she was injured. They give her a biscuit with a sedative on it. When it put her to sleep she was hidden in an ambulance storage bin and taken to an orphanage.

On June the 12th 1996, Jonathan church was 1 out of 18 soldiers who were killed during a training exercise in Townsville where two black hawk helicopters collided. The helicopters were about 30 seconds from where they were to land when one turned to the right and caught the other helicopter by the tail rotor, both caught on fire. Some survivors and soldiers risked the flames to retrieve the bodies of the dead. Deaths during training make up the majority of the special air service regiments fatalities. This has been the worst accident in the Regiments history.

The photo above was taken by George Gittoes. He once said:

'My photograph of Jonathan Church carrying the baby that is on all the posters, that's been a postage stamp, if you look closely at that photograph, there are tears running down Jonathan's face. And I know that before he was killed in the Black Hawk accident he wrote to his mother that the only thing that had enabled him to survive psychologically was the fact that he had been able to save just some children. I would like to think that all the soldiers can focus on that rather than the lives that were lost'.

<http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au/missions/more/UNAMIR%20more.htm>

'This photograph which I took in Kibeho is very moving to me, but it's become a symbol like Simpson and his Donkey. It's my — it's of my friend Jonathon Church who is a paramedic SAS, and at Kibeho

I think that these activities do demonstrate responsible citizenship because Jon helped the child to safety and believes he did the right thing by doing so. He didn't care about race, religion and differences, he just did what he thought was right, to care for a scared helpless child. I believe that this is an important part to being a responsible citizen, to put all differences aside and take responsibility to help anyone who is in trouble.

These are desirable qualities in the Navy, Army and Air Force because they need the kind of people who put others first, to do what they believe and to help people in trouble without worrying about their differences.

I think that the role of peace keepers could be commemorated by having a day set aside to think of the people who are helping to bring peace to the world, a bit like ANZAC Day or Remembrance Day.

References

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- www.peacekeepers.asn.au/missions/.../UNAMIR%20more.htm