

UNFORGETTABLE HERO (Ajay Ahuja)

Exactly twenty-two years ago, Squadron leader Ajay Ahuja of the Indian Air Force's Golden Arrow Squadron was killed by Pakistani soldiers after he ejected from his aircraft in Batalik Sector!

A small town boy from Kota, Rajasthan who we remember as the bravest of all men who also been honoured by Vir Chakra made us believe what the patriotism real meaning is!

Ajay Ahuja did his schooling from Saint Paul's Senior Secondary School, Mala Road Kota, a renowned missionary school for boys. He was a upgrown boy from Rajasthan. He graduated from the National Defence Academy and was commissioned a fighter pilot on 14 June 1985 in the IAF and become Squadron Leader Ahuja afterwards.

Kargil war 1999

The Kargil War occurred on the top of the Kargil hills, between 8 May 1999, when Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri activists were spotted. In the autumn of 1998, Pakistan is said to be planning for the operation.

By 30 June 1999 the Indian Forces were poised for a large high-level operation in the disputed Kashmir region against Pakistani installations along the border. India has moved five infantry divisions, five independent brigades and 44 paramilitary battalions in Kashmir over the last six weeks. The area had reached around 730,000 Indian troops. In addition, another 60 frontline aircraft were being sent. And in one of them was operated by Squadron Leader Ahuja.

On May 27, 1999, at about 10.30 am six aircraft-four MiG 27 fighters on attack role, and two MiG-21 fighters in escort role took off from Srinagar after successfully attacking Muntho Dhalo, the biggest Pakistani supply base in the Batalik Sector. It was then Flt Lt Kambampati Nachiketa jet suffered a flame-out, and he had to eject. Squadron Leader Ahuja decided to locate where flight lieutenant Nachiketa had ejected and sent back... the GPS coordinates so that he could be rescued. While attempting to locate downed fellow pilot, squadron leader Ahuja was hit by a stinger missile. By sheer perseverance, he was able to locate the possible crash site and transmitted this information to rescue the helicopters. Unfortunately, at this stage, his aircraft was hit by a surface to air missile. With the exemplary presence of mind and cool professionalism, he attempted to nurse the aircraft towards a safer area. But when the aircraft engine flamed out squadron leader Ahuja had no choice but to eject. He ejected safely and had the presence of mind to transmit his last recorded ground position.

On May 28, 1999, the body of squadron leader Ahuja was handed over to Indian authorities. The body bore two bullet injuries. It was reported that the left knee fracture was sustained when he parachuted down, but the gunshot plays the different story that he was alive while landing and was shot after that. The nation called his death a cold-blooded murder!

Though today Squadron Leader Ahuja is not alive physically but his contributions and love towards his country will be always there, so will he in all Indians' heart.