

Major Mohit Sharma - A Beacon of Sacrifice and Patriotism



*Ananyaa Madhur Sharma**



In the inspiring journey of life of Veer Major Mohit Sharma, Ashok Chakra, Sena Medal, 1 Para Special Forces – 5 Madras, Indian Army, we trace it back to his early days. Born in a land steeped in tradition and diversity, he imbibed the values of patriotism and duty from a young age. These principles led him to join the Indian Armed Forces, where his path would evolve into one defined by courage, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication.

This tradition of sacrifice has its roots in India's history, particularly the struggle for independence. The brave actions of freedom fighters left an indelible mark, fostering a collective spirit that continues to thrive in those who serve in the armed forces today. When challenges arise, individuals like Major Mohit Sharma step up to face them, embodying the spirit of safeguarding our borders and maintaining peace.

In the midst of risks and uncertainties, our armed forces remain resolute, always prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to ensure our nation's safety, secure our borders, and uphold the well-being of our people. Major Sharma following in the footsteps of his predecessors, chose his path willingly, motivated by a deep-seated desire to serve his country.

Very few people get the opportunity to be connected to the family of Bravehearts. I was privileged to be born into one. Major Mohit Sharma is a hero, an inspiration,

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and a motivation for all but also a terror and a fear for those who plan to destroy this peaceful, harmonious country. He was not only my Chacha but also a son, a brother, and a brother-in-law who fulfilled all his duties with a smile on his face. Fondly called as “Chintu” at home, “Mike” for his coursemates, “Iftikhar” for terrorists and “Major Mohit Sharma” for Bharat.



With parents and elder brother Madhur Sharma (extreme right)

Born on 13th January 1978 in Rohtak, Haryana, to Shri Rajendra Sharma and Mrs. Sushila Sharma ji, Major Sharma was brought up in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. He had just begun his undergraduate studies when he received his SSB call for the National Defense Academy. Not willing to send their son to join the forces, Major’s parents did not tell him about it, hoping that he would continue with his engineering. Determined to join the forces, he made every effort to achieve his dream. Having successfully cleared the selection process and met the required criteria, he left his graduation to join the academy.

In academy, he was not only known for his humorous, fun-loving, caring attitude, but also for the officer-like qualities he possessed that were enough to prove his ability and capability to put his country and his fellow soldiers before himself always. An upright, dedicated and an honest officer par excellence. During his NDA tenure, where he was a member of the India Squadron (Injuns) and he came out as one of the best cadets. He was amongst the best players of



With his favorite guitar

academy in field of sports like Swimming, Boxing, Horse-Riding etc. He also loved playing mouth-organ and guitar which added to his overall personality. His fellow soldiers say that he would be either holding a guitar or an Israeli Tavor rifle in his hands. In fact, any new musical instrument he came across, he took it as a challenge to get mastery of and made sure he could play it to perfection. He never hesitated to give live performances and enthralled his listeners with his beautiful singing.

He successfully completed his Army training in the Indian Military Academy (IMA) in December 1999. He knew that in Indian Army, he wanted to join Infantry and in Infantry "Special Forces" is the best address. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant into 5 Madras. His first posting was at Hyderabad from where he went on to serve the country with 38 RR (Rashtriya Rifles) in Jammu and Kashmir as the part of counterinsurgency operations where he received his first medal for gallantry COASM (Chief of Army Staff Commendation Medal) in the year 2002. From the very beginning, he wanted to be a para-commando and joined 1 Para (SF) - the elite force of the Indian Army in June 2003 after clearing the tough probation period. He also served as an Instructor at Commando Training school at Belgaum, Karnataka and trained many commandos there.



Major Mohit Sharma as 'Iftikhar' for the covert mission

In Major Sharma's life, we find remarkable achievements and a deep sacrifice. His selfless choices led to the ultimate sacrifice for our country, creating an inspiring legacy that will inspire generations to come. He was a trained para commando and also had the advanced skills sets of that of an intelligence officer, knowledge of different terrains and a spy. His ultimate tactics and sharp strategical mind helped him to accomplish really challenging and complex anti-terrorist operations.

One of the defining events involving him occurred in 2004. While my family was celebrating my birth, he was in Pakistan sharing tea with the terrorists, highlighting India's resilience. In that covert operation, he infiltrated the ranks of terrorists as a pseudo terrorist with long hair and beard flowing down to his shoulders and neck to blend seamlessly into the terror outfit. His code name was "Iftikhar Bhatt" and he lived with them for 2 weeks to gain vital information before finally killing them. He was awarded "Sena Medal" gallantry for his act of bravery.

It was not far when he left us, giving up his holidays for his colleague, and left for dense Haphruda forest in Kupwara District of Jammu and Kashmir for a tough mission. On 21st March 2009, 14 years ago, while leading his Bravo Assault team,



Major Mohit Sharma's portrait and the Tricolor in which he came home last time draped in it

he killed four terrorists and rescued two brother soldiers before attaining Veergati. Even when he was grievously injured, the soldiers could hear their Team leader on the radio set with his voice short of breath now, "Firing rukni nahi chahiye, Hum issi ke liye Special force me hain aur issi ke liye train karte hain" and helped the entire squad take cover before he did. His last order was that the terrorists should not escape before laying down his life at the age of 31. One of the fellow soldiers who was also a part of this operation once told that if Major Mohit sir would not have guided us then there could have been more casualties. He was awarded Ashoka Chakra (posthumously) which is India's highest peacetime gallantry award on Republic Day i.e., 26th January 2010 by then the President of India.

He has lived his dream to do something different for the country. My Chacha was cremated on the same day as Shaheed Divas i.e., 23rd March which was his destiny. Since then, a void has been created in our family that cannot be filled by any means, but we all can work together so that Chacha becomes proud of us all and showers his blessings.

My Chacha is one of the legendary Paratroopers of Indian Army and every special force personnel is a "Men Apart, Every Men an Emperor." There was always a desire in him to make a difference and this desire connects all the young enthusiasts who volunteer for the elite and coveted Special Forces. The biggest draw is the Maroon Beret that these soldiers adorn and is a symbol of brotherhood among Special Forces across the world. These people are different from the rest even before they volunteer for it.

My dad once said in an interview after performing Chacha's last rites, "I'm unfortunate I don't have a son right now, I do have two daughters. I will try and make sure that I can coach them and show them if they want to join the Army". God allowed me to fulfill my dad's dream and be proud that he has daughters. The inclusion of women in NDA was an avenue for me to prove this. I was recommended for the NDA(W)-149 Course from 14 SSB Allahabad after 27 years of Chacha clearing the same examination. It was my tribute to my Chacha, Major Mohit Sharma, AC, SM. I am sure he will be proud of me and will keep making him proud with every day that passes.

In March 2011, as a tribute to Major Mohit, the road connecting Loni Road and GT Road in Rajendra Nagar was named after him as “SHAHEED MAJOR MOHIT SHARMA MARG”. Also in 2019, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation decided to rename Rajendra Nagar Metro Station as “Major Mohit Sharma Rajendra Nagar station.” In 2021, Major Mohit Sharma’s statue was also unveiled at Rajendra Nagar in Ghaziabad by the Defense minister of India, Shri Rajnath Singh.

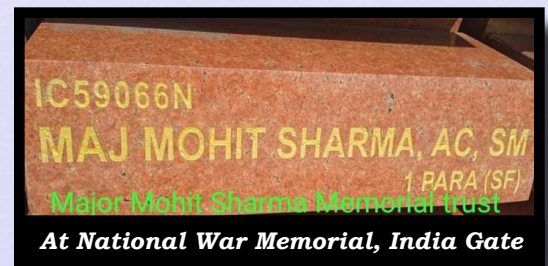


Major Mohit Sharma’s statue in Rajendra Nagar, Ghaziabad



Rajendra Nagar, Ghaziabad, Metro Station named after Major Mohit Sharma

Major Mohit Sharma’s name is also etched in golden letters in National War Memorial at India Gate in Delhi with the fellow soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. In 2010, our family has also established Major Mohit Sharma AC, SM Memorial Trust in the memory of Major Sharma. The trust has been working in various areas focusing on education and health for the girl child and underprivileged children. The trust also installed scholarship at DLF Public School, Sahibabad since 2010 for 2 students with Cash prize of 3,100 each including a girl child who has a remarkable achievement at National level across both curricular and extracurricular fields. Under its flagship, various inter school competitions are being organised such as inter school cultural competition at DAV Public School, Nahan and inter school soccer competition in DPSG Ghaziabad, among others.



As I pay tribute to Major Sharma and his life, let us also remember the countless others who have fearlessly given everything they had, enriching our land with their

dedication. Their bravery and commitment motivate us to stand together, cherish our hard-earned freedom, have oneness and work towards a brighter future, just as they did. Soldier's pride is nation's security and with this, let us salute to all the guardians of Bharat.

Also, always carry a place for your country in your heart, no matter how big or small it is. Our country is our best identity.



Home of Major Mohit Sharma in Ghazizbad, where a room is dedicated to his memories



Illustration by Sonali Kumari

Pictures credit Surabhi Sharma