



Captain Charles W. Cooper
19 September 1957 - 21 February 1991

Captain Charles W. Cooper was born on 19 September 1957. He was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in October 1989, and served as a 2nd flight Platoon Leader in Charlie Company. He was known as a great leader, destined to command a company and battalion. His easy, get along with everyone attitude, all-American looks and his constant smile made him a joy to be around. He was a great pilot and officer who loved his job, his Soldiers, and the mission.

On 21 February 1991 CPT Cooper and the crew of aircraft #251 responded to a request for an urgent medical evacuation deep in enemy territory. Under zero illumination, he flew his aircraft at an extremely low altitude to evade air defense artillery threat. In spite of dense fog, which he could not increase altitude to avoid, and against which his night vision equipment was useless, he continued his mission by relying on his experience using navigational instruments and extracted a badly wounded Soldier. While returning to the medical facility, he encountered a sandstorm and lost visual reference with the ground. Subsequently the aircraft crashed, and CPT Cooper selflessly gave his life for his country. For his extraordinary heroism he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, and the Meritorious Service Medal.

CPT Cooper is survived by his wife, Emily; son, Logan; daughter, Claire; and brothers, Kevin and Kent. He is laid to rest in Kane County, Illinois, at Garfield Cemetery.