



First Lieutenant John R. Hunter
28 January 1959 - 20 December 1989

First Lieutenant John R. Hunter was born in Libby, Montana, on 28 January 1959 and volunteered for service in the U.S. Army in August 1977. He began training as an electronic warfare/signal intelligence specialist and later studied German at the Defense Language Institute. It was most likely during this time that John set his goal to become an Army Aviator. He completed the Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Aviation Course in March 1981, with follow-on qualification in the AH-1 attack helicopter. In June of that same year, WO1 Hunter was assigned to Camp Stanley, Korea, as an AH-1 pilot. His service with the 4/7 Cavalry initiated his professional development as an aviator and an officer. Departure from Korea took John to the 214th Attack Helicopter Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington, where he served as an AH-1 pilot, and later as an AH-1 instructor pilot.

In March 1985, CW2 Hunter officially voiced his desire to join Task Force 160. His superb military records and aptitude for learning new and complex aviation techniques won him acceptance in June 1985. CW2 Hunter reported for duty on 1 March 1986. He successfully completed mission training, and was subsequently assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as an AH-6 pilot for one year prior to departing for Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in June 1987 in the Aviation branch and eagerly attended Airborne School en route back to Fort Campbell and Bravo Company.

1LT Hunter served as Flight Platoon Leader and Executive Officer for Bravo Company until he was transferred to Headquarters and Service Company. He was specifically chosen to fill a position as Group Liaison Officer to a classified unit. He performed well in his new position, undoubtedly drawing on his vast experiences and maturity.

In his 1985 application for Task Force 160, John was asked this question. What would you most like people to say of you after you have lived your life? His response was, "I'm not looking for my name to go down in history, but if people were to say something, it might be that I was a good person and that I might be missed."

1LT Hunter's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (w/1 OLC), Army Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Air Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces

Expeditionary Medal (w/Bronze Arrowhead), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Senior Army Aviator Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. 1LT Hunter was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart.

1LT Hunter distinguished himself by gallantry in action on 20 December 1989 while assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion as an AH-6G Light Attack Helicopter Gunship Pilot during Operation JUST CAUSE. Although his helicopter sustained hits from enemy anti-aircraft fire, he remained in an intense battle to support the exfiltration of friendly ground forces. After firing his ammunition, he quickly rearmed and, showing a complete disregard for his own personal safety, he returned to the engagement to ensure the successful mission accomplishment of the ground forces. His aircraft, #678, sustained a crippling hit and crashed.

1LT Hunter is survived by his sisters, Kate, Patricia, and Dana. He is laid to rest in Hamilton, Montana, at Riverview Cemetery. Building #7252 on GEN Brown Compound at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is dedicated in his honor as Hunter Hall.