



***Master Sergeant James "Tre" W. Ponder III
24 June 1969 - 28 June 2005***

Master Sergeant James "Tre" W. Ponder III died on 28 June 2005 in eastern Afghanistan when his MH-47D Chinook helicopter, #146, was shot down by an enemy rocket propelled grenade while flying in to rescue the members of a SEAL team during Operation RED WINGS.

MSG Ponder was born on 24 June 1969 in Alabama. He volunteered for service in the U.S. Army in March 1990 as a Chinook Helicopter Repairer. After graduating from Basic Training at Fort Eustis, Virginia, he was assigned to Camp Humphries, Korea. He arrived at the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) in December 1992 and was assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. MSG Ponder served in a variety of positions including Maintenance Team Leader, Company Standardization Instructor, Platoon Sergeant, Battalion Flight Engineer Instructor, 160th SOAR(Abn) Flight Engineer Instructor, Battalion Standardization Instructor and, finally, Regiment Standardization Instructor. This was his fourth rotation to Afghanistan.

MSG Ponder was a graduate of the Primary Leadership Development Course, Combat Lifesaver Course, Special Operations Training Course, Flight Engineer Instructor Course, Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Equal Opportunity Leader Course, Air Assault Course, Basic Airborne Course, Army Safe Program, and the Army Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course.

MSG Ponder's awards and decorations include the Air Medal (w/"V" Device), Air Medal (w/Numeral 3), Army Commendation Medal (w/1 OLC), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal (w/3 OLC), Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Superior Unit Award, Good Conduct Medal (5th Award), National Defense Service Medal (w/1 Bronze Service Star), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (w/2 Bronze Service Stars), Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (w/Numeral 3), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Parachutist Badge, Special Operations Diver Badge, Senior Aviation Badge, Master Aviation Badge, Air Assault Badge, and the Expert Qualification Badge (Rifle and Pistol). He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal (w/"V" Device), and Combat Action Badge. MSG Ponder was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame in March 2015.

MSG Ponder is survived by his wife, Leslie; two daughters, Samantha and Elizabeth; and his parents, Jimmy and Rebecca. He is laid to rest in Clarksville, Tennessee, at Greenwood Cemetery. The Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion company headquarters, building #7275, on GEN Brown Compound at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is dedicated in his honor as Ponder Hall and Hangar #7902 at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, is dedicated in honor of the crew of Aircraft Tail #146 as Turbine 33 Hangar.