



***Chief Warrant Officer Three Wilson "Sonny" B. Owens
25 April 1960 - 20 December 1989***

Chief Warrant Officer Three Wilson "Sonny" B. Owens was born on 25 April 1960 in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. In December 1978, after graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Navy. His training included Antisubmarine Warfare Operations, Aircrew Candidate School, Search and Rescue Combat Swimmer School, and SERE training. His interest in aviation became more intense as he was exposed to more air operations and aircrew training.

He graduated from flight school in June 1983 and immediately reported as a WO1 to Giebelstadt, West Germany, as an aerial scout. He was assigned to the 3d Attack Helicopter Battalion for 38 months. In October 1985, CW3 Owens applied to join Task Force 160. He said that he wanted to be involved with professionals that routinely operate in demanding environments. CW3 Owens was accepted to Task Force 160 in September 1986 and was assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He advanced to become a Fully Mission Qualified AH-6 Instructor Pilot. He was known as one of the best shots in the Little Bird guns. When CW3 Owens was asked what he would most like people to say of him after he had lived his life, his response was, "I guess I would want them to say there goes a guy who lived hard, traveled all over and worked hard. He loved his country and his family."

His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (w/1 OLC), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Aviator Badge, Navy Expeditionary Medal, Navy Battle Ribbon, and the Sea Service Ribbon. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, and the Air Medal.

CW3 Owens 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.

CW3 Owens is survived by his parents, Wilson and Mary; brother, Walker; and sister, Dana. He is laid to rest in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, at Southern Palms Memorial Gardens, Mem 4, Lot 47, Site B1.

Building # 7262 on GEN Brown Compound at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is dedicated in his honor as Owens Hangar.

*CW3 Owens was promotable at the time of his death. The Night Stalker Memorial Wall was engraved with CW2 Wilson B. Owens prior to his posthumous promotion.