

Lieutenant Colonel J.B. Harper (US Army)

Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey B. Harper, United States Army, 48, of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas passed away 6th July 2007 at MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, Texas following a courageous battle with cancer.

He was born 12th May 1959 in Mount Gilead, Ohio, the son of Ronald A. and Mary Ann (Long) Harper. He graduated from Mount Gilead High School, Mount Gilead, Ohio in 1977. Jeff enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1984 and earned his commission as the Distinguished Honour Graduate of his Officer Candidate School class in 1991.

Lieutenant Colonel Harper then served as an Air Defence Artillery officer until his death. During his military career he completed the U.S. Army Paratrooper Training in 1991, earned four Meritorious Service Medals, five Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, the Army Superior Unit Award, two Army Good Conduct Medals, two National Defence Service Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korea Defence Service Medal, two Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbons, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

On 3rd November 1984 he was united in marriage to Juli Ann Fisher in Mount Gilead, Ohio. Throughout his military career Jeff, Juli and their family resided at multiple locations including Fort Stewart, Georgia, Fort Lewis, Washington, Fort Polk, Louisiana, Fort Knox, Kentucky, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Bliss, Texas, Puckapunyal, Australia and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Jeff also served two unaccompanied tours in Korea.

Lieutenant Colonel Harper graduated from Otterbein College with a Bachelor of Arts in History in 1982 and from Saint Mary College in Leavenworth, Kansas with a Master of Arts in Education in 2003. He also graduated from the Air Defence Officer Basic Course in 1991, the Armour Officer Advanced Course in 1995, and the Command and General Staff College in 2004.

He was an avid lover of sports as a player, a fan, and aspired to be a coach after military retirement. In 2004 he was inducted into the Mount Gilead High School Athletic Hall of Fame for the following achievements: Football: 3 letters. 1st Team All MOC (1977). Baseball: 3 letters. As a pitcher – 1st Team All MOC (1976, 1977). 1st Team All Sectional and 1st Team All District (1977). Track: 1 letter. Pitched for Division I University of Nevada-Las Vegas 1978 (6-1). Pitched for Otterbein College 1980-82. 1st Team All OAC Conference Pitcher (1981, 1982). 1st Team Division III NCAA. Baseball All-American – 1982. Jeff's hobbies included reading history and coaching baseball. His other interests included watching his children play sports and walking his dog Cracker.

Editors Note: Lieutenant Colonel J.B. Harper was the first US Air Defence captain exchange instructor to serve with School of Artillery in its new home at Puckapunyal. He served at the School of Artillery as an instructor from 1998 to 2000.