



8 March 1986 - 25 August 2017

Staff Sergeant Emil Rivera-Lopez, 31, died on 25 August 2017. He was deployed overseas, aboard a MH-60M Black Hawk helicopter when it crashed into the water during a training mission off the southern coast of Yemen.

Staff Sergeant Emil Rivera-Lopez was born 8 March 1986 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He enlisted in the United States Army on 18 July 2006 and attended Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, followed by Advanced Individual Training at Fort Eustis, Virginia, where he was trained as a UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter Repairer (15T).

Staff Sergeant Rivera-Lopez began his service with Delta Company, 3-82nd Combat Aviation Brigade from March 2007 to September 2008. Following his assignment with Delta Company, he served as a Crew Chief with the 3-82nd MEDEVAC Company until May 2013. Upon completion of Night Stalker Enlisted Green Platoon in July 2013, where he was recognized as the Distinguished Honor Graduate, SSG Rivera-Lopez was assigned to Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), where he served as an MH-60M Maintainer and Squad Leader. In November 2014, he was reassigned to Charlie Company, 3-160th SOAR(Abn), where he served as a Section Sergeant and MH-60M Crew Chief.

Staff Sergeant Rivera-Lopez is a combat veteran with multiple deployments in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and INHERENT RESOLVE.

Staff Sergeant Rivera-Lopez is a graduate of the Basic Leader Course; Advanced Leader Course; Night Stalker Enlisted Green Platoon (Honor Graduate); Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) High Risk (Level C) Course; MH-60 Maintainer Course; MH-60 Nonrated Crewmember Course; Dunker; and Basic Airborne Course.

Staff Sergeant Rivera-Lopez awards and decorations include the Air Medal with numeral 2, Army Commendation Medal with "V" device, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Good Conduct Medal (third award), National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three bronze service stars, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with numeral 2, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Combat Action Badge, Aviation Badge, and Parachutist Badge. He was posthumously awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and Senior Aviation Badge.

Staff Sergeant Rivera-Lopez is survived by his wife, Amanda; son, Elijah; daughter, Remy; stepsons, B.J. and Gabriel; stepdaughter, Jocelyn; father, Eduvigis; mother, Carlita; brother, Lemuel; and sisters Veronica and Carla.