

Prv. 1st Class Tony Potter, Jr.

December 12, 1990 - September 9, 2011

Funeral services for PFC Tony Joe Potter Jr., will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011 at the First Baptist Church in Okmulgee. Burial will follow in the Okmulgee Cemetery under the direction of McClendon Winters Funeral Home of Okmulgee.

The 20-year-old Oklahoma National Guard member died Friday, September 9, 2011 in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. He was born in Tulsa on December 12, 1990 to Tony and Yvonne (Draper) Potter Sr. His grandfather James Draper preceded him in death.

Survivors include his wife Emily Yarbrough Potter, his parents, a sister Christy Potter Foley and her husband Keith of Okmulgee, a brother Dillon Potter of Okmulgee, a sister Sarah Potter of Okmulgee, paternal grandparents Emanuel and Laverne Potter of Okmulgee and his maternal grandmother Barbara Draper, Arenzville, IL.

The 2010 Okmulgee High School graduate's body will be flown into the Tulsa airport at 10:50 a.m. today (Friday). The brief military service will be held there to honor the fallen hero. Afterwards, McClendon Winters Funeral Home will bring the soldier to Okmulgee in a special military procession that will arrive in town sometime in the early afternoon. Local residents are invited to stand along the route to pay respects to this fine young man who died fighting for our freedom. The exact time the of his arrival will be posted, if possible, on the Okmulgee Daily Times FACEBOOK page Friday morning. As for the route, officials expect that it will come south from Tulsa down US 75 (Wood Drive)

and then turn west onto 8th street and proceed to McClendon Winters Funeral Home at 7th and Porter. Some of those who wish to pay their respects can do so outside the funeral home, while others will want to line up along the route leading to the funeral home.

News of PFC Potter's death began to spread late on Friday evening.

However, the Department of Defense did not make the formal announcement until Sunday, Sept. 11, 2011 - exactly a decade after the terrorists attacked America.

According to the DOD, PFC Potter was killed Friday in Afghanistan. Two other Oklahoma National Guard members killed on the same day were Sgt. Bret D. Isenhower, 26, of Lamar; and Spc. Christopher D. Horton, 26, of Collinsville; The three were in Paktia, Afghanistan, when enemy forces attacked their unit. They were cut down during a small-arms fire attack, officials said.

The soldiers were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 279 Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma National Guard in Tulsa.

According to the report, two other soldiers also were wounded in the attack but are expected to recover from their injuries. The group of soldiers had stopped to check out a land mine and were ambushed by enemy fire. PFC Potter was fatally wounded along with two of his fellow Guard members.

PFC Potter and his wife Emily (Yarbrough) Potter were expecting their first child in the spring. Emily was a college student at NEO A&M at the time of the attack.

The Okmulgee native was a 2010 graduate of Okmulgee High School. In school, he was an outstanding wrestler for Coach Jeff Pulliam's Bulldog mat program. In his senior bio, he listed his favorite memory at OHS as "me and 'Bull' (Coach Pulliam) running at each other with medicine balls. I flew at least 10 feet ... great times!"

Tony Joe was also an outstanding football player. He played in the front line and worked hard to protect the quarterback and running backs. He was very proud of helping the Okmulgee Bulldogs qualify for the playoffs in his senior season at OHS.

Just prior to his May graduation, he joined the Oklahoma Army National Guard in an April 2010 enlistment. He took the hard route, signing up to become an infantryman.

Another big step was finding the love of his life in Emily Yarbrough. When it was time to propose to her, he enlisted the help of his editor friend at the Okmulgee Daily Times. Emily knew Tony Joe was in love with her and was going to ask her to marry him. However, she had no idea when or how he would pop the question. To spring the surprise trap, he brought the unsuspecting young lady to the editor's office with the idea he was getting only articles about his sports career. Once the cute couple sat down, he began telling how wonderful she was and how crazy he was about her. That was the editor's cue to suggestion that "I think you ought to marry this one!" With that (happened) cue, the young man stood up and pulled a ring from his pocket.

"I think I will (ask her to marry me)," he said. With that, he dropped onto one knee and asked Emily to share the rest of his life with him. Stunned and crying tears of joy, she happily said "yes ... yes!"

This was a storybook beginning for Tony Joe and the future Mrs. Emily Potter. The couple announced their wedding plans with an article in the Okmulgee Daily Times that included the surprise proposal from Tony Joe. They were married in November 2010.

More joy came their way recently when Tony Joe and Emily learned they were going to have a baby, and soon would become a 'family.' They were still waiting on the doctors to tell them if their child would be a boy or girl.

Tony Joe's military service was also excellent. He was promoted to Private First Class in May 2011.

It seemed a wonderful world was in store for the adorable couple. However, the trip to forever ended on Friday when an evil foe in a far-away land took the life of one of Okmulgee's finest citizens. Officials said PFC Potter is the youngest Oklahoma Army National Guardsman to die in either Iraq or

Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001. This was his first deployment.

Maj. Gen. Myles Deering, adjutant general for Oklahoma, issued his deep sorry about the Sept. 9th deaths of the Oklahoma soldiers.

“This is an extremely sad day for the 45th Infantry Brigade, the Oklahoma National Guard and the entire state,” he said “These young men exemplified the courage and commitment of the finest Citizen-Soldiers. And, the fact that they all volunteered to join the military and serve during this time of war says a lot about their character and devotion to our country.”

The losses of Oklahomans have mounted rapidly since July. In fact, there have been 10 Oklahoma National Guard soldiers from the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team killed in Afghanistan since July 29. Overall, 15 Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldiers have died in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11.

An article in the Tulsa World indicated Friday's death toll marks the second time Oklahoma has lost three soldiers in a single day. In September 2008, three Oklahoma Army National Guardsmen were killed when an Army CH-47 helicopter crashed in Iraq.

There are about 2,200 Oklahoma National Guardsmen in Afghanistan for a deployment that started in June.

“Our casualty assistance teams are currently with the families of these fallen heroes,” Deering said in a statement. “While the fighting will surely continue in the weeks ahead for the brigade in Afghanistan, the families of these brave men are our priority back here at home.”

Family members went to Dover, Delaware, to be there when PFC Potter's flag-draped coffin arrived at the air force base where all fallen heroes are brought.

“Today at 3:30 a.m., I watched them unload mine and Tony's son from an aircraft,” said the soldier's grief-stricken mother, Yvonne, in a FACEBOOK post. “Got to be the saddest day of my life.”

Okmulgee friends are praying and offering words of encouragement to Emily and to all members of the Potter family. Hundreds and hundreds of

FACEBOOK post have shared their love and concern for those who were closest to the late Tony Joe Potter.

There will be a memorial service and military honors for the young hero when his body is returned to Oklahoma. The funeral services are pending with McClendon Funeral Home. As soon as plans are finalized, the memorial service time and location will be announced.

On Friday, Okmulgee High School is hosting Okemah in a football game at Harmon Field. It appears a group of Tony Joe's friends are preparing a special event in his honor there, from 7:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. More on that will be announced when it becomes available.

PFC Tony Joe Potter is the third service member with direct ties to Okmulgee County to die in Afghanistan. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician 2nd Class Tony M. Randolph, 22, of Henryetta, Okla., was killed while conducting combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in July 2009. Kevin Cueto of the U.S. Marines died last June in Afghanistan. In a related note, PFC Potter will be honored at the Okmulgee High School Homecoming game this evening. He was a talented football player for the 2009 playoff team at OHS.

Funeral services may be viewed live at <http://memorialstreams.com/ms/Winters>

Please use Service ID:3248

Password: potter

Previous Events

Service

SEP 17. 2:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Okmulgee
311 W. 5th Street
Okmulgee, OK

Tribute Wall



“ *Prv. 1st Class Tony Potter, Jr.*

December 20, 2022 at 11:29 AM



“ *To the family of Tony,
God bless you all. I am member of the national group Prayer Shawls for Fallen Soldiers. We send prayer shawls to family members of our fallen heroes. If we can send your family any shawls, we would be honored to do so. Please contact me with your name and address and how many shawls you need. Thank you.
Melanie###imported-begin##Melanie Staubitz###imported-end##*

February 04, 2012 at 01:31 PM



“ *T.J. your baby is a boy! Yeah. I'm soo proud of you. Now you know what your baby is. I miss and love you dearly. I know the baby is going to be soo spoiled. And he would have been anyways by you. Love u cousin!###imported-begin##Tommie Brown-Reed###imported-end##*

September 21, 2011 at 12:59 PM



“ I miss and love you everyday more and more. But I know one day I will see you again. You are and always be the best person ever. I will miss your smile and your goofy laugh. I'm just glad I have a had the chance to be in your life for almost 21 years. Others didn't get to see the amazing person you are and will always be. You will always be my family. And nothing is more true then the bond we have had. I Love You, T.J.!

Your Cousin, Tommie! Can't wait to see your baby I think it is a girl
T.J.##imported-begin##Tommie Brown- Reed##imported-end##

September 19, 2011 at 01:48 PM



“ My deepest condolences are given to the family during this time of lose. It has effected all of us here in Afghanistan. To here of such a young life is so heart breaking. My prayers and thoughts are with Emily and the rest of the family during this time. May God Bless all of you and bring Peace upon your hearts. He will be Missed dearly by all of his family, friends, and fellow Brothers and Sisters in Arms.##imported-begin##Spc. Jamee Gaines##imported-end##

September 18, 2011 at 06:06 AM



“ We are sorry for your loss. God bless all of you##imported-begin##JOhn & Dawn Quesenbury##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 09:34 PM



“ Thank you for serving our country and giving the ultimate sacrifice so we can have our freedom.Emily,Tony Sr.and family we r praying for you in this very trying time in your life.##imported-begin##chris and uonna edmonds##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 06:38 PM



“ god bless to the family,,i have a son that spend a year in irag,,thank god he is home now,,i have the upmost graditude for our servive men and women,,thank god for all of you.##imported-begin##rita##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 01:28 PM



“ We are so sorry about Tony's death. Our prayer is that God will sustain you through this difficult time and bring you great peace. We pray for your strength to be renewed and for the Holy Spirit to minister to you on a daily basis.
Paul and Burnell Lay##imported-begin##Paul and Burnell Lay##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 01:26 PM



“ My thoughts and prayers are with your family. May God give you strength in this difficult time.##imported-begin##Terri Brown##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 12:15 PM



“ We appreciate and are grateful for your service and your sacrifice. Condolences to all the family and Lord Bless Emily and their Baby. Bennie and Gilda##imported-begin##Bennie Griffin##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 11:37 AM



“ My deepest prayers for the family of this brave young soldier. May God be your comfort and strength.##imported-begin##Susan Hill##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 10:38 AM



“ My thoughts and prayers are with your family. TJ was a exceptional young man.##imported-begin##Tanya and Katy Condren##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 10:35 AM



“ Potter family, Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. Peace be with you. Thank you for your sacrifice TJ, we are forever grateful.##imported-begin##Jessica Acton and Brian Thomason##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 10:04 AM



“ You will forever be in our hearts.##imported-begin##Ashlyn Fish##imported-end##

September 17, 2011 at 01:25 AM



“ My deepest sympathy to your family...I did not know this fine young man..I'm sorry i never met him...Our country has lost a True American Hero! God Bless your family...I'm truly sorry for your loss..
Sincerely
Sandra Wallace###imported-begin##Sandra Wallace###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 11:21 PM



“ From the staff at Green Country we are sorry for your loss. Tony was one of our favorites.###imported-begin##Dan Spurlock
Superintendent Green Country Technology###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 08:37 PM



“ I am so very sorry for your loss. I wish I could thank him for his sacrifice to our country, he is a true hero. Your family is in my thoughts and prayers. God Bless you.###imported-begin##Glenda Bohuslavicky Harris###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 07:11 PM



“ IM SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT TONY.I WILL KEEP HIS FAMILY IN MY PRAYERS###imported-begin##Jackie L.Howell###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 06:20 PM



“ Tony an Yvonne we are truly sorry for your loss. Tj was a good kid an from everything I have read an heard about him he turned out to be a very well rounded young man who knew what he wanted to do with his life.He will always be a hero to those of us who were lucky enough to know him.He will greatly missed by those who knew an loved him , but a part of him will always be with all of you.Eventually the hurt will start to heal and you will have his precious child to carry on his spirit.All of you are in our thoughts and prayers, if you need anything ,please let us know.##imported-begin##Ronnie , Shelli Nelson##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 06:14 PM



“ My deepest smypathy for the loss a of a loved son, husband, brother, grandson, uncle and dedicated soldier..I didn't have the pleasure of knowing TJ but know his sister (Christy)..My heart will be with you tomorrow as you lay his body to rest..Pfc. Tony Potter Jr. a true and dedicated American hero..He will be forever remembered..God Bless the family..Love, Ruby##imported-begin##Ruby Schwarting##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 06:08 PM



“ TJ made the ultimate sacrafice. He is and will always be remembered as a true Hero. Thank you for your service. God bless you and your family.##imported-begin##Kevin, Angela & Kaylee Reed##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 03:13 PM



“ We thank you for your service and ultimate sacrifice. May God Bless you and your family.##imported-begin##Murray McPherson##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 02:17 PM



“ We are so truly sorry for your loss. I know this will leave a broken piece in your heart that will never mend. Tony will always be with you and he leaves a precious piece of himself in his child. You are in our hearts and prayers##imported-begin##Nancy and Don Christian##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 02:08 PM



“ OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU.##imported-begin##B & B SMALL ENGINE REPAIR##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 01:56 PM



“ I want to express my sincere sympathy for this young man's family! He is a true hero, my prayers are with you through this difficult time!##imported-begin##Debbie Gregory##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 11:39 AM



“ dear tony,vonn and emily, i am so sorry for your loss. i have lived the fear of the knock on the door. we lived 20+ years with a national guard soldier.this was something tj wanted and truly believed in. we lost our son one year ago and we no the pain. remember to let god carry your hurt till you are stronger and take one step at a time. all my love and prayers. susie brown###imported-begin###SUSIE BROWN###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 11:20 AM



“ So very sorry for your loss. My thanks to he and his family for his service and sacrifice to our country. I will remember him as a hero. May God comfort you in your time of sorrow.###imported-begin###Joe Prentice###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 10:41 AM



“ So very sorry for your loss. My thanks to he and his family for his service and sacrifice to our country. I will remember him as a hero.

May God comfort you in your time of sorrow.###imported-begin###Joe Potter###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 10:39 AM



“ We love you TJ, you will be missed greatly. Thank you for being a friend of our family & Kendrick's best-friend. You left us with many good memories, thank you for being a part of our lives. Journey well my son.###imported-begin###George, Bobbie, Courtney, Moxin Polecat###imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 09:52 AM



“ May you find peace in the memories you have of Tony and comfort in the love of your friends and family. We are so sorry for you loss. Thank you Tony for your service. You will be greatly missed.##imported-begin##David, Shannon & Austin Brewer##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 09:11 AM



“ To the Family of Tony Potter, I want to Thank-you for allowing your son and husband the opportunity to serve this Country. I appreciate the fact that all of these men so bravely fight for each of us to enjoy the freedom we do not deserve. I am so saddened that you have lost such a precious piece of your life. I pray for you that you will receive peace and comfort from God knowing that he was a wonderful person. I am the nursing director at Green Country Technology Center and Tony worked in my department and nuilt a beautiful desk that will be here after we are long gone. Again, pkease accept my condolences and know how proud we are of Tony for his unselfish serveice for all of us. Thank-you and God Blessm If you want to visit later and see his work, I will be glad to have you. Glenda Mariano##imported-begin##Glenda Mariano##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 08:58 AM



“ TJ was a wonderful person. The world will be a darker place without him. We are so sorry for all of you.##imported-begin##Jaime Courtney & Family ##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 08:17 AM



“ My sincere sympathies to this soldier's family in this time of grief and sadness. He answered a higher call when he joined the National Guard; and stood on that wall to protect us as those have before him and he set an example for others to follow in the future. May he rest in peace.##imported-begin##James E. Williams##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 05:30 AM



“ To Tony's wife, mother and all other family & friends.

I am so deeply sorry and saddened by this tragic loss, I know that right now words can not begin to express the loss that you are feeling, but please know that your husband & son will forever be in my memory and I will never forget the sacrifice that he as well as each of you have made for our Country. Although I did not personally know Tony we are all of the same great big military family. My Uncle is deployed over seas with the rest of our troops and ai know that he also has been deeply saddened by this tragic loss and every loss that we have all endured in this horrible war on terror. Thank you so much Tony for being such a Brave man and for doing something that many of us were always to fearful to do, you went to a land far far away to protect millions of people whom you had never met, but I promise you that each one of us is very great-full and proud that we have hero's like you over there fighting for us. Rest in Peace Hero for we will take care of everything from here.. To the family; if you ever need anything at all please do not hesitate to ask, I may not know you but there is absolutely nothing I wouldn't do for any of you.##imported-begin##Brandon Meeks##imported-end##

September 16, 2011 at 01:57 AM



“ man I'm so sorry to the potter family!!! I love toney like a brother!! I loved watching wrestle!! And when he would win he would go crazy!! I Miss u toney! we will all see u agin soon one day!! Love you toney!!

R.I.P TONEY JOE POTTER JR.##imported-begin##Teri Marris##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 09:18 PM



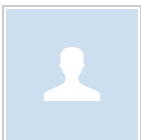
“ sorry for your oss sounds like a very special person##imported-begin##david cunningham##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 06:25 PM



“ You were takin way to early. You will truly be missed by everyone. I am so lucky that I got to meet you when we were younger. I know your in a better place now but it still sucks to know your gone. I know you will be watching over Emily and your child every single day. I will keep your family in my prayers and will think of you often. God Bless Tony Potter##imported-begin##Jessica Johnson Reese##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 05:30 PM



“ My deepest sympathy to the family. We will be praying for all of you.##imported-begin##Paula Green##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 04:30 PM



“ I personally didn't know him and his family but people I work with do. My prayers go out for his wife and both their families for this great loss.
Thinking of you in days that come that the Lord surrounds you in his love and care.##imported-begin##Debbie Moore##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 03:35 PM



“ Thank you Pfc. Potter for your ultimate sacrifice. Our son was honored to serve with you.

Sending our deepest sympathies to your family at this time. May God wrap the family with love during this time.##imported-begin##Cyndi & Steve Cox (Okla. Army National Guard Parents)##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 03:05 PM



“ Tony, you will always be a Hero! Thank you for making the ultimate sacrifice! I know you will always be watching over Emily and your precious baby! RIP##imported-begin##Hannah Eldridge##imported-end##

September 15, 2011 at 02:59 AM



“ From a soldier and his family, our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.##imported-begin##Ed and Casta Mordecai##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 11:17 PM



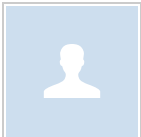
“ We salute your veteran. Our condolences for your loss & gratitude for your loved one's service to our country. May your memories & God's love bring you peace & comfort at this difficult time.##imported-begin##Larry & Lana Hurt (Patriot Guard Riders)##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 09:16 PM



“ Thank you so much for your sacrifice TJ! I will always see you as the little boy sitting at the counter at Kirby's eating breakfast with your dad. God Bless You!It is because of you that my baby boy will have the opportunity to grow up in a free country. Tony and Yvonne, I love you both dearly, you are in my thoughts and prayers daily!##imported-begin##Maggie Bailey##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 08:46 PM



“ I remember teaching Tony in 3rd grade. He was a sweet young boy then and I know he turned out to be a fine young man who was proud to serve our country. My gratefulness goes out to him and the many others who fought to keep us protected. May God be with you at this time of loss.##imported-begin##Mrs. (Mills) Bond##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 08:22 PM



“ u will be missed tremendously, you served urcountry well, Everyone will miss u lots.##imported-begin##tammy woodward stacy##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 06:41 PM



“ From one soldier's family to another, we send our deepest sincere condolences. God works in mysterious ways and decides the paths of our lives. When he is ready we will all meet again in the heavenly golden gates. God bless your families. Thank you for allowing him to serve our country. Soldiers are never forgotten, but always remembered.##imported-begin##Rogers Family##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 05:03 PM



“ emily i am so sorry for the loss of TONY my prayers are with you and the whole potter family. TONY thank you for the ultimate price you had to pay for our freedom. god bless each and everyone of your family. sue culbert##imported-begin##sue culbert##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 12:47 PM



“ Emily we are so sorry for your loss. May God truly hold you and your precious baby in his arms always. There are just no words to comfort at this time. Please know that you remain in our prayers.##imported-begin##Linda Sains##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 11:28 AM



“ tony, i am deeply sorry to hear about your son, i didn't have the plessure of knowing him, but i'm sure he was a great young man. if moma or i can do anything for your family just let us know.##imported-begin##cari baker long##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 09:39 AM



“ i am so sorry for your loss, jack and i have always loved you tony, if i can do anything for your family just let me know.##imported-begin##lois kolakowski##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 09:35 AM



“ Bless your family always. Thank you for your dedication to this country.##imported-begin##Kari Hopkins##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 09:05 AM



“ Our thoughts, prayers, and love are with your family in your time of sorrow. Just know that he will always be with you no matter what you do in life. May God Bless You!##imported-begin##Denise Maddon##imported-end##

September 14, 2011 at 08:09 AM



“ So sorry for the loss of Tony our hearts go out to the family for his sacrifice##imported-begin##Dan Colombin Jr.##imported-end##

September 13, 2011 at 10:31 PM



“ My sincere sympathy to the family.##imported-begin##Jeneane Campbell##imported-end##

September 13, 2011 at 09:59 PM



“ Thoughts and prayers to your entire family.##imported-begin##Ginny & Haden Dunn##imported-end##

September 13, 2011 at 05:53 PM



“ We truly appreciate the sacrifice Tony and his family made to enable us to have FREEDOM. Our hearts ache for you. You are in our thoughts and prayers.##imported-begin##Robert & Cathy Lopez##imported-end##

September 13, 2011 at 04:43 PM