Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2008 Induction

Retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael J. Durant's performance during active military duty and in retirement mark him as one of Aviation's best. He is most famous for his harrowing 1993 experience during Operation Gothic Serpent in Somalia - as a member of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) deployed with Task Force Ranger - where he was shot down and held as a prisoner of war by hostile Somali militia for 11 days. Despite his multiple injuries, his performance during captivity - chronicled in news magazines, books, documentaries and a feature film - is heralded as a model of the "Warrior Ethos" for all Soldiers. His personal conduct serves as a benchmark for today's survival, evasion, resistance and escape training for all of members of U.S. military. But Mike Durant's contributions go well beyond Somalia. He served for 22 years in the Army, 13 years as a Night Stalker, accumulating over 3,700 flight hours. A key member of the team that developed the armed Direct Action Penetrator helicopter with mini-guns, 30mm cannon, rockets and Hellfire missiles for the 160th SOAR; he was the first to fire the specially modified UH-60L Black Hawk in combat, engaging a SCUD missile launcher during Operation Desert Storm. He also developed and implemented a fully comprehensive mission rehearsal system for the 160th SOAR which has contributed immeasurably to the success of special operations forces operations. Since his 2001 retirement, he has continued his dedication to Army aviation; helping develop the transportable Black Hawk operations simulator, known as T-BOS; a high fidelity flight simulator for the UH-60L/M capable of deploying with units. The T-BOS was fielded in time to conduct training for the new UH-60M aircraft acceptance test pilots - an Army aviation first. A noted author of two books and a prolific public speaker, Mike Durant is one of the most recognized veterans of the military today, representing well the Army, the branch, his fellow Night Stalkers, and all who serve our nation.