



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE FY07 KOREN KOLLIGIAN, JR. TROPHY

TO

EUGENE V. BECKER

Lieutenant Colonel Eugene V. Becker distinguished himself by outstanding achievements in airmanship by executing a successful emergency landing of an MH-53M during a night time tactical training mission on 7 September 2007. On that evening, the aircraft suddenly began vibrating while in a hover, just past a tight landing zone that cut into 90-foot trees. Suspecting electrical malfunction, Colonel Becker immediately took the controls and punched off the flight control system. When the problem persisted, Colonel Becker ordered the system back on, and continued to execute a go-around. He made two "mayday" calls as he flew a tight, tree-top level turn with dangerously low rotor speed due to a failed gear box. The moment he was clear of the trees, Colonel Becker entered an autorotative descent into the landing zone to maintain enough rotor speed for a survivable landing. Knowing he had only one chance, he cushioned the landing with impeccable timing as the aircraft spun violently into the ground, saving the lives of all seven crewmembers on board. Colonel Becker's expertise and professionalism were directly responsible for the safe landing of a multi-million dollar aircraft which makes him especially deserving of this award. Colonel Becker's superior airmanship and ability to perform under extreme circumstances reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
General, USAF
Chief of Staff



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

06 FEB 2008

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Washington, DC 20330-1670

Lieutenant General Donnie Wurster
Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command
100 Bartley Street, Command Suite
Hurlburt Field, FL 32544-5273

Dear General Wurster

I am pleased to inform you that Lieutenant Colonel Eugene V. Becker, 20th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Florida, is the recipient of the Koren Kolligian, Jr., Trophy for fiscal year 2007.

Colonel Becker executed a successful emergency landing of an MH-53M during a night time tactical training mission on 7 Sep 07. On that evening, the aircraft suddenly began vibrating while in a hover, just past a tight landing zone that cut into 90-foot trees. Suspecting electrical malfunction, Colonel Becker immediately took the controls and punched off the flight control system. When the problem persisted, Colonel Becker ordered the system back on, and continued to execute a go-around. He made two "mayday" calls as he flew a tight, tree-top level turn with dangerously low rotor speed due to a failed gear box. The moment he was clear of the trees, Colonel Becker entered an autorotative descent into the landing zone to maintain enough rotor speed for a survivable landing. Knowing he had only one chance, he cushioned the landing with impeccable timing as the aircraft spun violently into the ground, saving the lives of all seven personnel on board. His piloting skills, leadership, and situational awareness under dire conditions illustrate the very best in airman leadership.

Please extend my congratulations to Colonel Becker for his selection as the recipient of this prestigious award.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T. Michael Moseley", is positioned above the typed name.

T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
General, USAF
Chief of Staff