



Chief Warrant Officer Three Donovan L. Briley
19 December 1959 - 3 October 1993

Chief Warrant Officer Three Donovan L. Briley was born on 19 December 1959 and grew up in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He graduated from flight school in 1985 and volunteered for service in the U.S. Army Reserve. Later that year, he was piloting Drug Enforcement Administration agents and state troopers on a marijuana detection mission when the helicopter crashed. He sustained burns and back injuries, but within four months, CW3 Briley was back up flying.

CW3 Briley served the Army in South Korea before joining the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). He again displayed his courage and unwavering focus during action in Panama in 1989 during Operation JUST CAUSE. His steady demeanor in the whirl of combat could be relied upon regardless of the intensity of the moment. CW3 Briley was truly a gifted pilot. His main interest was always studying for how he could better himself, always striving to be a better pilot.

CW3 Briley's actions were heroic as the pilot of an assault into a highly contested urban objective in Mogadishu, Somalia, on 3 October 1993 in Operation GOTHIC SERPENT. After a brilliant assault of the objective, he held his position and fought to support the ground forces during their actions. His aircraft, #324, was subsequently downed by enemy fire and he and his copilot were killed. Because of his exceptional skill, the passengers' lives were saved.

CW3 Briley's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (w/ "V" Device), Purple Heart, Air Medal (w/"V" Device), and the Air Medal (w/Numeral 2). He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Air Medal (w/ "V" Device) for gallantry in action during combat operations. While preparing Donovan's nomination packet for the Arkansas Military Veterans Hall of Fame (AMVHoF), his widow, Sharri, discovered the Distinguished Flying Cross was never archived in the Department of Defense Military Records. With the efforts of Donovan's friend and comrade, CW5 Mark Bergamo, this was brought to the attention of the Secretary of the Army. As a result, the US ARMY upgraded 58 medals for special operators involved in The Battle of Mogadishu. Donovan's Distinguished Flying Cross was upgraded to a Silver Star.

CW3 Briley is survived by his wife, Sharri; daughter, Jordan, and her husband Jacob; grandsons, Isaiah, Elijah and Canaan, and brothers, Duke, Danny, and Micah. He is laid to rest in North Little Rock, Arkansas, at Edgewood Memorial Park. Building #7246 on GEN Brown Compound at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, is dedicated in his honor as Briley Hall.