Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1998 Induction

Chief Warrant Officer 4 William T. Hargrove has "done it all" throughout his 30 year military career.

He began as an enlisted Soldier in 1951, serving as a combat engineer in Korea in 1952-1953, then as a NCO attended the Warrant Officer Candidate course at "Camp" Rucker, Ala., graduating in the 12th WOC class (55-Q) in November 1955.

After earning his aviator wings and warrant officer bars, Hargrove was trained in the CH-34 helicopter and was soon assigned to Fort Rucker's Aircraft Test Activity and flew flight tests on many evolving Army aircraft, including the "Huey" series (YH-40, HU-1A, HU-1B, HU-1D).

Following warrant officer fixed-wing qualification in 1960, Hargrove was stationed in with the Army's Southern European Task Force (SETAF) in Italy.

Here he attended the Italian Army aircraft ski-school and was awarded the Italian Army aviation badge, becoming a helicopter mountain flying instructor pilot for Italian aviators.

Trained in helicopter instrument flying, Hargrove also established an instrument training program for the other SETAF UH-1 qualified Army aviators.

During Presidential visits in Europe, Hargrove flew support in 1961 for Mrs. John F. Kennedy in Greece and for President Kennedy's 1963 Italy trip.

Later in 1963, following the catastrophic Vajont Dam landslide and water surge high in the Italian Alps, Hargrove flew numerous CH-34 mercy missions.

His actions during this relief operation earned him an Air Medal, the "Winged-S" air rescue emblem from Sikorsky Aircraft, and the Italian Government's Bronze Medal.

Then in 1965 Hargrove deployed to Vietnam to serve as a field maintenance officer and fly UH-1s with the 151st Transportation Detachment.

Returning in 1966 to Fort Benning, Ga., he gained additional aircraft maintenance experience as a detachment commander.

Back to Vietnam in 1968, Hargrove "accorded in testimony of his flying ability." flew as a UH-1 aircraft commander for all missions flown by MG Robert R. Williams, commanding general of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

From 1969-1974, he was assigned again to Fort Benning, serving as an aircraft maintenance shop platoon leader. It was here that he flew the stars during the filming of the Vietnam based movie "The Green Berets."

During this time Hargrove served on the Officer's Club board of governors and his recommendations provided the best service for assigned and visiting aviators.

Upon retirement in 1981, Hargrove left an aviation "legacy of duty" as a Master Army Aviator with 7,200 accident-free flight hours, 1,200 in combat, qualified in 22 aircraft-types, with his 50 medals including the Distinguished Flying Cross and 29 Air Medals, and numerous service ribbons and decorations from Korea, Vietnam and Italy.

Truly an Army aviator for the Army Aviation Hall of Fame.