Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2001 Induction

LTC William A. Howell's contributions to our country, the Army and Army Aviation over 63 years as soldier, aviator and retiree have been exemplary. Again and again he had to create new units or fix difficult problems in existing units, each requiring extraordinary ingenuity, persistence, organizational ability and inspirational leadership.

He enlisted in 1938 and served in horse-drawn artillery at Fort Benning, Ga. Commissioned 2LT of Infantry from OCS, he served in the North African and Italian Campaigns from 1943 until WW1I ended in 1945. He became an Army liaison pilot in 1946.

As Light Aviation Advisor to the North Carolina National Guard, he inherited a dozen airplanes and one mechanic. He recruited and trained WWII pilots and mechanics and obtained Federal recognition for the resulting Army Air Sections.

In January 1951, during combat, he started from scratch to establish Army Air Sections in the Korean army. Utilizing WWII Japanese-trained Korean fighter pilots and mechanics, he created the units and insured their continuity by establishing two schools to train new pilots and mechanics.

In 1954 he was selected by the Chief of Transportation to command the 506th Helicopter Co. at Fort Benning - its fourth commander in less than one year. The credibility of Army viation with

the infantry was directly related to the performance of the 506th - to date, that had been unsatisfactory. The day before he took command, a tornado wrecked 13 of his 14 H-19s - 7 H-25s were OK. His leadership was infectious and 30 days later a command inspection ranked the 506th among the best at Benning.

After three years at Benning, he was called to organize and command the Army's first presidential flight support unit. In this extremely high profile and demanding duty, as the only Army pilot authorized to fly the president, he was eminently successful. When the Executive Fight Detachment was awarded the American Helicopter Society's Koessler Trophy, President Dwight Eisenhower honored Howell and his unit by attending the awards dinner.

After Howell retired he was appointed the first curator of the Army Aviation Museum. He started with two WWII wooden warehouses and some weather-beaten aircraft. His 11 years of continuing improvements led to what is now a major attraction. On retiring again he took on volunteer duty with the Army Aviation Museum Foundation. His service with the Foundation continues to this day.