Brigadier General Joseph B. Starker

Joe Starker was one of those few visionary young aviators who made possible Army Aviation as you know it.

As a creative and productive member of the Howze Board, his imaginative genius provided the kind of Innovative thinking that determined what Army Aviation would be for years to come. His great charismatic leadership of the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion in Vietnam set an example in courage and command ability that all other commanders tried to emulate. With his exceptional skill in the technical and tactical aspects of air assault and his courageous presence in directing battle actions in hot LZs and highly dangerous extraction missions, day and night, frequently taking hits, Joe Starker became the persona of the aviation professional. He was the first battalion commander to serve his entire tour in command in Vietnam.

Following the Army War College, Starker served as division chief in the Weapons Systems Analysis Directorate of the Office of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff. He was selected to serve on a five man team headed by (then) MG Bob Williams to work with a select five man team from the U.S. Air Force to determine the fate of the Army's Advanced Aerial Fire Support System and the Air Force's Advanced Ground Support Fighter (AX). Starker was a key contributor in this landmark action for Army Aviation that resulted in the production and fielding of the Apache.

As a colonel, Joe Starker returned to Vietnam to command the 17th Aviation Group during the critical battles of I and II Corps in 1970-71. Starker was the personal and special choice of LTG Phip Seneff and General Bill Depuy to design, organize and direct the test of the Air Cavalry Combat Brigade, a concept Starker helped develop as a member of the Howze Board. The tests were a complete success and the test unit became the 6th Cavalry (ACCB).

After promotion to brigadier general in 1972, Starker served as the Chief of Staff, MASSTER, before taking command of the Combat Developments Experimentation Command at Fort Ord and Hunter-Ligget. He returned to Fort Hood in 1974 to become the Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division.

At age 46, his life was tragically taken by a drunk driver.