Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1975 Induction
(Inducted to represent the 1942-1949 period)

COL J. Elmore Swenson, then a major during the 1942-1949 period, was a World War II combat veteran and later an aviation personnel specialist within the Department of the Army.

He entered the aviation program as a member of the Army's first flight class in August 1942 at Fort Sill, Okla.

One of the first liaison pilots to be sent overseas, he exploited the tactical use of army aviation to the fullest as the air officer of the 29th Infantry Division's artillery.

Leading his "29th Air Force" as he called his air section, Swenson called in one of the first fire missions on Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

He and his men participated in all of the European theater of operation's major battles from Normandy to campaigns throughout France, Holland, Belgium and to victory in Germany.

While serving as an aerial observer with Fifth Army in 1946, he qualified himself as one of the Army's first helicopter pilots.

In mid-1948, Swenson was assigned to the Army Staff as the aviation officer with the Career

Management Division, a point in time at which only 425 artillery liaison pilots were on active duty, and the chances for survival of the aviation program were bleak.

Through astute staff work, personal expertise and salesmanship, Swenson was able to establish a revitalized aviation program which included aviator authorizations within all combat arms and in several of the technical services as well.

His staff work served as the basis for the Aviation Career Management System, and included a plan for periods of ground duty to keep aviators branch-qualified and competitive with their non-flying contemporaries.

Swenson was responsible for the design and adoption of the insignia for Army Aviator wings, and the establishment of the aviator rating system which defines the aviator, senior and master aviator professional levels.