Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1975 Induction
(Inducted to represent the 1950-1959 period)

Colonel (later Lieutenant General) John J. Tolson became actively involved with Army Aviation in 1953 while serving as Chief, Doctrine and Combat Developments, G3, Headquarters, Department of the Army. At that time he initiated the first study dealing with the tactical application of Air Cavalry. From this assignment, he moved to Fort Benning, where he was the Director, Airborne-Army Aviation Department, Infantry School, from 1955 to 1956.

During his tenure, he completed the development of initial aviation doctrine and subsequently published the first field manual governing the tactical employment of Army Transport Aviation on the battlefield. This work was validated in Vietnam and remains a basic reference for the tactical employment of Army Aviation.

In 1957, Tolson completed Fixed & Rotary Wing Qualification at Fort Rucker, and subsequently served for two years as the Assistant Commandant of the Aviation School. This was a very formative period in the School, particularly in the developing of armed helicopter concepts and the formation of our first provisional air cavalry unit, the 7292d Aerial Combat Reconnaissance Company [Provisional].

Studies by the School's Combat Developments Office produced concepts for the Air Cavalry Division. Also, lasting innovations in pilot and mechanics training were initiated during this period. From 1959 until 1961 Colonel Tolson served as Deputy Director of Army Aviation. It was during this period that he participated in key decisions in consolidating the family of Army aircraft for future development which later became the workhorses of the Vietnam Conflict.