Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2001 Induction

CSM Willy Wilson began his career in Army aviation as an aircraft mechanic. On his first combat tour in Vietnam he served as mechanic and door gunner in both Army and Navy helicopter gunships. On his second he was a technical inspector, and also served as flight engineer of a CH-54 crew that tested new off-loading procedures for seagoing vessels. They off-loaded 700 tons of cargo from the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney in four hours and 30 minutes.

In the mid-sixties Wilson was a crew chief of a CH-34 with the NASA Gemini Program determining feasibility and procedures for land versus sea recovery. In August 1979 he was NCO in charge of Operation Northern Leap, which established a new operational concept for self deployment of Chinook helicopters in a multi-helicopter flight from Fort Carson, Colo., to Heidelberg, Germany.

His last active-duty assignment was director of enlisted maintenance training, a position previously held by either a colonel or Lt. Col. He was not only successful as a department director, but also established an Aero Scout Observer Course, restructured the Air Traffic Control Course, and established and served as Commandant of the Army Aviation Branch NCO Academy. His peers as directors in the Aviation School were senior commissioned officers with whom he competed successfully for resources.

Since retiring, he continues to serve Army aviation as vice president, operations, for a defense contractor involved in overhauling Army helicopters.

During active service, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Crosses from

the Army and Navy, two Bronze Stars, 25 Air Medals, Meritorious Service Medal, Purple Heart and others. His service sets him apart from his peers; he has made contributions normally unattainable at his grade level.