Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2007 Induction - Atlanta, GA

Retired COL Norman M. "Mike" Bissell made unique contributions to Army Aviation during his military career and after retirement in the service of his country.

Graduating from the Virginia Military Institute, he became a parachutist, Ranger and an Army aviator before serving two combat tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Bissell later graduated from the Command and General Staff College, the Army War College, and was selected as a Senior Army Fellow at Harvard University.

As the director of Flight Training at Fort Rucker, he organized the directorate into a brigade to enhance the career opportunities of the instructor pilots.

While commanding the 17th Avn. Bde. in Korea, he redesigned the buffer zone flight procedures along the demilitarized zone, and created and commanded the U.S. Army and Korean Army Combined Aviation Command.

He was also an executive officer to the Assistant Secretary of the Army and the J3 for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In 1968, Bissell was nominated for the Medal of Honor for rescuing a severely wounded American advisor, extracting him from a landing zone after three attempts.

During his second approach to the LZ his aircraft received heavy enemy machine gun fire, killing his door gunner, and wounding him in the neck. For his heroism, Bissell received the Distinguished Service Cross.

His other awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, and three Legions of Merit.

In 1987, he became the program manager for joint Boeing/Sikorsky Team vying for the future RAH-66 Comanche helicopter.

When his team won the contract, Bissell returned to VMI to serve as the commandant.

Later he became the commandant of the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership, the only all female cadet corps in the world.

In 2004, Bissell received the Gold award of the Order of St. Michael for his distinguished Aviation service.