Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1992 Induction

For every new item of equipment that is proven on the field of battle, there are usually a few individuals who stand out as dedicated advocates – applying heroic energies and skills to promote its success.

So it was with the helicopter as it made its debut on the battlefield of the Korean War.

Aviators quickly proved the worth of the Bell H-13 as a key lifesaving factor in battlefield casualty evacuation.

But it remained for CPT William P. Brake to prove the true workhorse dimensions of one aviator and one helicopter.

Brake's incredible record of 900 casualty evacuations in the span of 14 months in Korea has remained unchallenged.

He was on combat assignment with the 49th Medical Helicopter Ambulance Detachment from March 1952 to May 1953.

A man of uncommon skill and enormous energies, he flew missions along the entire chain of casualty evacuation.

Alternately, he could be seen lifting patients from field hospitals to evacuation hospitals for shipment to Japan or the United States.

In his 14 months of service in Korea, Brake flew 567 missions of which 311 were combat missions, lifting 415 casualties from the front lines to field hospitals.

He lifted an additional 485 patients from the field hospitals to facilities for evacuation out of Korea.

Before leaving the Army, Brake was also an instructor pilot and member of the U.S. Army's helicopter demonstration team.

Brake's pioneering spirit, dedication and energetic efforts to prove the productivity and worth of the helicopter in medical evacuation roles profoundly influenced the post-war vision of the role of the helicopter in the Army of the future.