Army Aviation Hall of Fame 1998 Induction

In 1942, then CPT Robert F. Cassidy was designated as the principal air observer for the field testing of organic air observation for the Field Artillery with the 2nd Infantry Division competing with the Army Air Corps Observation School.

The outstanding success of the artillery air observation post in the competition resulted in the approval of the concept by the War Department.

Subsequently, Cassidy fought his way into the program at a time when regular Army officers, particularly West Point graduates, were being strongly advised by their superiors to avoid aviation as a "dead end street."

On completion of flight training, Cassidy established the tactical training part of the Liaison Pilot Course and was responsible for all tactical training until 1944.

He then transferred to the Eighth U.S. Army, where he was senior artillery aviation officer in the Pacific.

Later, as the senior aviator in the Department of Air Training at Fort Sill, Okla., from 1950 to 1951, Cassidy was primarily responsible for the smooth, efficient expansion of flight training from a rate of 100 pilots per year to 2,600 to meet the requirements of the Korea Conflict ? an astounding increase.

In 1951, he became the aviation officer in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics on the Army Staff.

Because of numerous complaints from overseas field commanders regarding deficiencies in depot level supply and maintenance support, Cassidy proposed, prepared and successfully staffed a study on the transfer of all logistic support for Army aircraft from the Air Force.

As the action officer for the entire project from 1952 until 1955, during which time there was almost unanimous opposition by the Army General Staff, as well as the USAF staff, Cassidy was able to overcome the opposition by his tactful persuasion and numerous revisions.

By mid-1955, a memorandum of understanding was approved; resulting in the independent depot support structure for Army aviation.

Cassidy was also the logistic member of a team that did the studies and sold the Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on expanding the experimental five-company cargo helicopter program to 12 battalions, and then procured the H-21 and H-34 helicopters to fill them.

From 1957 to 1962, he served as the chief of the Aviation and Airborne Division, Materiel Development Section of the U.S. Continental Army Command, where he expertly guided the development and user tests for the H-37 and UH-1A through D model helicopters, and the CV-2A Caribou and the OV-1 Mohawk aircraft for the Army?s growing aviation arm.

In his final assignment as assistant commandant of the U.S. Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker from 1963 to 1965, this master aviator judiciously directed the rapidly increasing training program, including the expansion of the Warrant Officer Candidate School and the Army aircraft maintenance program to support the growing conflict in Vietnam.

A true aviation pioneer, superb trainer and logistician, and a major contributor to the success of Army Aviation from its inception, Cassidy is richly qualified to join the Army Aviation Hall of

Fame.