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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Army Aviation Association of America Announces 2026 Army Aviation Hall of Fame Inductees

(MONROE, Conn., April 3, 2026) – Three new members will be inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA), in ceremonies at a Hall of Fame Induction Banquet during the AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit in Nashville, Tennessee on Thursday, April 16, 2026.

The Army Aviation Hall of Fame honors those persons who have made an outstanding contribution to Army Aviation over an extended period, a doctrinal or technical contribution, an innovation with an identifiable impact on Army Aviation, efforts that were an inspiration to others, or any combination of the foregoing, and records the excellence of their achievements for posterity.

The actual Hall of Fame is located in the Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, Ala., where the inductees' portraits are hung, along with brief descriptive narratives of their achievements.

All persons are eligible for consideration, except active duty generals and colonels. AAAA membership is not a requirement and anyone may nominate a candidate for the Hall of Fame.

A Board of Trustees composed of current members of the Hall of Fame selects the candidates among the many nominations received to be placed on a ballot distributed to AAAA.

Including the newly-elected members, there are now 196 members of the Army Aviation Hall of Fame. The first induction was in 1974.

AAAA is a non-profit organization formed to advance the knowledge, efficiency, and overall esprit of those who are engaged professionally in the field of U.S. Army Aviation. Its more than 20,500 members come from the Active, Reserve Components, Department of the Army Civilians, and aerospace industry as well as a variety of military and civilian aviation support groups.

The AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit provides an opportunity for its members to gather with other government and industry representatives concerned with Army Aviation and participate in a professional program and exhibits.

The Hall of Fame Inductees at the 2026 AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit are:

LTC (Ret.) James Michael “Mike” Sprayberry – Medal of Honor



Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) James Michael “Mike” Sprayberry answered the nation’s call during the Vietnam War, embarking on a career defined by courage, leadership, and lifelong service to Army Aviation.

Commissioned through Officer Candidate School, Sprayberry deployed to Vietnam with the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He quickly distinguished himself in combat, serving as platoon leader, executive officer, company commander, and staff officer—often under intense enemy fire.

Wounded in January 1968, he declined evacuation and returned to his unit. During Operation Delaware, he leapt from a burning helicopter into combat and later led a night rescue mission to save a surrounded platoon. For his actions, he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

After Vietnam, Sprayberry served as an aviator, instructor, and doctrine developer, influencing Army Aviation tactics and missile integration. In retirement, he led efforts to recover missing Soldiers from Vietnam, helping bring closure to families.

His legacy reflects the Army Aviation ethos—leave no one behind.

CW5 (Ret.) Brent C. Driggers



Chief Warrant Officer Five (Ret.) Brent C. Driggers devoted more than four decades to U.S. Army Aviation, shaping the branch through leadership and innovation.

Serving over 31 years on active duty, he held critical roles including Standardization Officer for the 101st Airborne Division. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he flew combat missions providing vital support to ground forces.

As the second Chief Warrant Officer of the Aviation Branch, he oversaw development of more than 8,000 warrant officers and helped implement major training initiatives to prepare aviators for modern warfare.

After retirement, Driggers led the UH-60M training program, training more than 2,500 Soldiers and logging over 30,000 accident-free flight hours. He later led the fielding of Blackhawks to the Afghanistan Air Force and directed safe evacuation operations.

His legacy is reflected in the professionalism and readiness of today’s Aviation Branch.

CW5 (Ret.) Anthony “Tony” Rinderer



Chief Warrant Officer Five (Ret.) Anthony “Tony” Rinderer built a distinguished career marked by combat leadership and innovation.

After enlisting in 1986, he flew AH-1 Cobras in Germany and later joined the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. During the Battle of Mogadishu, he flew more than 17 continuous hours under fire, delivering close air support that helped save American lives.

He later served in a special mission unit, leading complex global operations. Following 9/11, he deployed to Afghanistan, conducting high-risk reconnaissance missions supporting Operation Anaconda, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Rinderer also became the first Army aviator since 1947 to drop a bomb from an Army aircraft in combat.

With more than 11,000 flight hours and 16 deployments, his legacy reflects the highest standards of the quiet professional.