

# Mr. Harold Dean Horton



Inducted August 18, 2011

Test Officer

Airborne Special Operations Test  
Directorate  
U.S. Army Operational Test Command  
Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1983-2007

Harold Dean Horton's 23 years as a Soldier and 24 years as a Department of the Army civilian earned him recognition as an acknowledged expert in the airborne community. His three combat tours in Vietnam brought him respect as a dedicated leader committed to mission accomplishment.

Born in rural Henry County, Virginia, on May 2, 1940, Horton joined the U.S. Army in 1959 as a parachute rigger for the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. In 1964 he became a Special Forces Light Weapons Leader at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, followed by a tour of duty in Ha Thanh, Vietnam.

Taking a different path in 1969, Horton completed Officer Candidate school at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was commissioned a field artillery officer. This career change led to Horton joining the U.S. Army Airborne, Electronics and Special Warfare Board as a test officer where he worked on the airdrop certification of the Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computer and M561 Gama Goat.

Horton redeployed to Vietnam as an A-Team commander in 1970, briefly returning stateside to Fort Wainwright, Alaska, as an artillery officer, only to return to Vietnam in 1972, again as an A-Team commander. After completing the Field Artillery Officer Advance

Course at Fort Sill, he then served a year in Okinawa as an A-Team commander and Basic Airborne and Jumpmaster Course Operations Officer.

Returning to Fort Bragg, Horton served as a fire support officer, battery commander and battalion S-4 with 1/319th Field Artillery, 82nd Airborne Division, 1974-1977. He was then assigned to a reserve unit at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, as an artillery brigade operations officer, fire support officer and battalion training management systems instructor.

Finishing his military career as a test officer with the U.S. Army Airborne Board, Horton worked on the certification of G-11B cargo parachutes and a replacement for personnel parachutes. Retiring from active duty in 1982, he started his long civilian career at the Airborne Special Operations Test Directorate (ABNSOTD), Fort Bragg, as an equipment specialist/test plans and management specialist in 1983.

Among the many operational tests Horton conducted as a civilian test officer were the aircraft certification for the C-5 and C-130J and the airdrop certification for the 60K Low Velocity Airdrop (LVAD) System used with the C-17. He was the test officer for the Type V airdrop, platform follow-on testing, responsible for rewriting procedures and recertifying more than 130 different loads for LVAD and Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System.

Mr. Horton also conducted the unique testing of the Penetration Augmentation Munition, a bridge-buster shaped charge used by Special Operations to destroy concrete bridges and abutments, and the Deployable Print Production Center, which gave psychological operations units high quality color printing capabilities near the front lines, allowing them to communicate more quickly with civilian populations.

Throughout his 24 years as a civilian test officer, he ensured all aerial delivery projects were properly planned, thoroughly researched, correctly conducted and accurately reported. Even in retirement, Mr. Horton is frequently called upon by ABNSOTD staff for counsel and advice.