

## ***Short Strips and Tight Grips: The Story of Max “Red” Hall***

Max Hall was born July 25, 1936 in Little Rock ,Arkansas. He was raised on the stories of famous aviators from the Second World War which created in him a keen interest in flying.

After highschool, he went to the University of Arkansas on an ROTC scholarship graduating a Second Lieutenant. In the 1960s, 99% of all graduating Army aviators were sent to Vietnam, and Lieutenant Hall was no exception.

Once in Vietnam, Hall was assigned to the 57th Transportation Company flying Piasecki CH-21 “Flying Bananas”. He oversaw numerous rescue, transportation, and extraction missions, but the “Flying Banana” was not conducive to the Vietnam War climate, terrain, or combat action. Thus, the 57th Transportation replaced it with the UH-1H Iroquios “Huey” helicopter. These were smaller, faster, and more maneuverable than the “Bananas”. Thus, they could deliver and rescue more troops than the CH-21 as well as even act as close air support in combat.

After the introduction of the “Huey”, the 57th Transportation was renamed the 120th Aviation Company signifying the change in aircraft. They were also given a nickname or call sign-the “Razorbacks”. Because Max Hall went to the University of Arkansas, he chose the “Razorback” for the new company’s name. The fighting “Razorback” was painted on the side of all Hueys in the 120th Aviation Company.

Max Hall logged over 500 combat hours in Vietnam and completed 812 missions in Vietnam without losing a single crewmember-even at the expense of his own injuries! He returned home in 1965. He worked as an engineer for the Highway Department for a few years before starting his own company *Engineering Services, Inc.*, which grew into one of the largest engineering firms in Northwest Arkansas.

Hall stayed with the Arkansas National Guard even after returning home from Vietnam. When Operation Desert Storm or the Persian Gulf War began, his unit was activated.

He was sent to Iraq to fly transportation, Medevac, and support missions in CH-47 Chinook helicopters. Again, he retained his record of not losing a single crewmember.

When he came back home, he retired from the National Guard and began working on new projects.

One of his favorite was bringing a piece of his war years back to his community. He did this by finding and rebuilding a CH-21 "Flying Banana". With the help of local veterans,

Hall had the "Banana" up and flying in record time. This project helped build his relationship with the Ozark Military Museum founder, Army Specialist (E-4) Leonard McCandless. From that point on, Hall would remain a loyal supporter and volunteer with this organization.

For the next couple of years, Hall would continue to educate his community about America's aviation and military history, sadly, however, his time was cut short when he was diagnosed with cancer due to Agent Orange exposure. Max passed away on September 15, 2000, surrounded by his beloved family.

He left a legacy of sacrifice, selflessness, and courage. He is still greatly missed by all.