

FIFTY YEARS VIETNAM & THAILAND - MIA POW

Da Nang Air Base: Lost Pilot, POW-MIA, 1,655 Americans are
"Unaccounted for" in Southeast Asia (Vietnam/Thailand)
(c) 2012, by Don Poss, 366th SPS, K-9. 1965-1966.

IN MEMORY OF CAPTAIN FRED HALL, USAF (MIA)

Panel 27W - Line 63

[Search Results \(thewall-usa.com\)](http://thewall-usa.com)



Composite Graphic, by, (c) 2012, by Don Poss, VSPA.com

Vietnam: *Forty years and more have passed since his aircraft was shot down in 1969. At first, the Rescue Search was furious. Then other pilots were lost. Transfers, new guys in, old guys out, and the war raged on. For years. In time, the MIAs files were relegated to a government issued file-cabinet bulging with files of other Lost Pilots and Navigators.*

For brief seconds the pilot had drifted under full parachute, then ripped through the upper jungle-triple-canopy jarring and shredding his way downward, like a steel-ball in an arcade pinball machine; bouncing, jarring, twirling over peg-like tree limbs that slammed him like a baseball bat.

He regained consciousness: Helmet shattered. Bones broken. Hard to breathe. Life seeping away, and he prayed he would see his family once more... and his girl, remembering their last moments together.

He didn't know how long he had been passed out, and awoke hearing Vietnamese voices below, shouting to each other. His vision was blurry and couldn't see through dark shadows of swirling multi-hues of greens below, nor could he move his broken arm to grasp his revolver. The voices moved on, slowly, following helicopter rotor noises, and by light of a silvery moon.

His dazed eyes searched drunkenly as he listened intently for sounds of rescue. His weapon, still strapped in a shoulder-holster, was useless—both shoulders shattered, and arms broken. Through the pain, he heard a chopper's whomping rotor-wash raking wind-trails through roiling treetops; a sudden squall of rain droplets shook-loose and fell noisily.

He awoke to a bright flickering of lights skipping across his face, like tiny boots of warmth. Dazed, he wondered if it was a doctor's flashlight. No, he surmised, he was just seeing spots—then recognized the jungle canopy was again dancing in the wind, teasing him with shafts of stinging-winking lights.

Dangling helplessly by parachute cords, the pilot could not see the forest bed below, but the forest-bed was too dark to see. In the clutches of tightly woven and gnarly-twisted vines, he felt as if a giant boa was crushing him. Trapped in the growing vine-coils that squeezed the blood from his wounds down the length of his body—his mind feared he would be cocooned and devoured by insects.

Semi-conscious, he sensed the darkness around him being cleaved by speckles of pale starlight—or was the light being splashed with buckets of darkness—he wasn't sure which; his mind too fuzzy. The jungle itself seemed a black-hole sucking light from day and life from all living things, while blessing belly-sliders and mosquitoes.

Time passed, and soon the aerial rescuers moved on. The night was void-dark as a cavern's midnight. Quiet, suffocating-stillness, abandoned, forsaken, alone. Discarded. Delusion pursued his lucid moments, offering no solace. He thought he was blind, as he could see no-thing.

Maybe tomorrow they will find me ... and take me home. They—will—find—me. Tomorrow. They will find me and take me home.

Lord, have they forgotten me ...?

October 2023 — Fifty-four later:

‘We never leave anybody behind:’ Vietnam veteran’s remains returned to Waynesville

WRITTEN BY [CORY VAILLANCOURT](#)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023



A detachment from Shaw Air Force Base prepares to escort Capt. Fred Hall’s remains to a waiting hearse. Cory Vaillancourt photo.

COURTESY OF: [HTTPS://SMOKYMOUNTAINNEWS.COM/NEWS/ITEM/36518-WE-NEVER-LEAVE-ANYBODY-BEHIND-VIETNAM-VETERAN-S-REMAINS-RETURNED-TO-WAYNESVILLE](https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/36518-we-never-leave-anybody-behind-vietnam-veteran-s-remains-returned-to-waynesville)

] For the first time in nearly 55 years, a Waynesville native and Air Force captain who didn’t return from his mission over Quàng Nam Province in South Vietnam is finally back among his family, friends and loved ones.

Fred Hall, a hero, has come home.

Fred’s journey began in Waynesville in 1943, where he was born to Robert

“Birdie” Hall and Irene “Reeney” Galloway. A bright student and talented musician, Fred graduated from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and enlisted in the Air Force in 1967. Around that time, he met and married Julia Jean Keith, a Texan who was crowned Miss Houston in 1965.

In February 1969, after completing navigator training, Hall was deployed to the southeast

Asian theater. Less than two months later, on April 12, 1969, Hall and his pilot Col. Ernest DeSoto crashed into a steep hillside under heavy cloud cover while returning from a mission . Their fate remained largely a mystery for decades. Both were listed as missing in action.

Hall’s journey home began on that hillside in 1995 when the crash site was rediscovered, although it would be another two decades before a Vietnamese excavation team was able to recover evidence from the site — aircraft debris and osseous remains.

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FREDRICK MERVYN HALL

CAPT - O3 - Air Force - Reserve

His tour began on Apr 12, 1969

Casualty was on Feb 9, 1978

In KONTUM, SOUTH VIETNAM

Hostile, died while missing, FIXED WING - PILOT

AIR LOSS, CRASH ON LAND

Body was not recovered

Panel 27W - Line 63