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Period 2

Al Basa
United States Air Force
20 years of service

Al Basa

Veterans were considered the brave men and women of yesterday but today they are considered heroes. Not only did they put their own lives at risk for a greater freedom than anyone could have ever envisioned, they also helped pave the way for what the military stands for today. Al Basa is one of these heroes and a valiant one at that. Vietnam saw tens of thousands of Americans casualties and many more wounded. Thanks to courageous soldiers like Basa, a medical evacuation expert, the wounded were given a second chance at life due to their unselfish valor. It was men like these, especially Basa, that gave the America the freedom today.

Al Basa was born and raised on the island Kauai, Hawaii where he graduated from high school in 1957. During high school he was involved in ROTC as well as being the student body treasurer. After graduating Al Basa attended Oregon State University where he received his medical degree. Although Basa envisioned himself becoming a pilot for the United States Air Force. He majored in pharmaceutical science and hospital administration. Upon graduating from college in 1964, Basa who was twenty-three at the time and joined the United States Air Force. Unfortunately, becoming a pilot wasn't in the cards for Basa because his eyesight wasn't good enough. So he would ultimately settle for becoming a medical officer specializing in evacuation from heavy combat zones.

The mindset of Mr. Basa allowed him to successfully execute his job whenever he was called upon. His main opinion of the war was that whatever needed to be done had to be done in order to keep the freedom America stood for. He was first stationed in New Jersey and eventually moved overseas to Germany being the youngest of his group to be assigned there. Over the course of his service time of 20 years, he would be stationed in Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Ohio, Texas, Victorville, and England for different assignments he volunteered for that involved duties surrounding moving the wounded from combat to local hospitals.

During Basa's tenure with the Air Force, at the age of 25 he met a woman, also a lieutenant, who would become his wife. This was a very important event of his life because his wedding band would become his lucky charm. He kept his wedding band with his dog tags and attributed this to being one of the major reasons he was able to survive all of the times he was in combat. They would go on to have three kids together and those same kids would give Mr. Basa and his wife 5 grandkids. The Air Force treated both Mr. and Mrs. Basa very well and eventually both would leave Active Duty to pursue other dreams that included running hospitals and pharmacies for over 20 years. This alone created many memories including speaking in front of NATO. Upon retiring, Mr. Basa settled down in Saudi Arabia for over 6 years working for an oil company associated with the Royal family. He claimed to, "Push the pencil by day, and the pill at night." Although Mr. Basa was very skilled at saving wounded men and women in combat, he was no match for fighting his wife's enemy. Mrs. Basa died in her husband's arm after losing the battle to cancer.

Today, Mr. Basa resides in the local Air Force Village West. His military service allowed him to see the world and experience things he never thought imaginable. He volunteered for

Vietnam one of the deadliest wars in American history and lived to tell about it. Mr. Basa is unsure of how many lives he was able to save but rest assured many families of many generations were continued on because of brave soldiers like him.