

2001 Hall of Fame Inductee Richard Hawkins – Aurora

Richard Hawkins is a man who has seen a lot of action, both on and off the baseball field. "Hawk" is a veritable treasure trove of American Military History having seen action in three major wars, from World War II to Korea to Vietnam. Although most of his umpiring brethren were used to seeing him in the standard blue uniform of the umpire. Hawk's comrades in arms knew him best as a top-drawer Chief Master Sergeant who served our country for 28 years in The United States Air Force. Hawk turned to the "Wild Blue Yonder" after a four-year hitch in the United States Army during which he saw action as a machine gunner in the European Theatre of Operations, from D-Day to V-E Day and every other day in between.

Hawk's reasons for turning in his combat fatigues for the Air Force blues, 54 years ago, did not suggest his love of baseball. As Hawk recalls, it was during a break in the overcast during his involvement in the famous Battle of the Bulge when the Air Force was able to resupply and provide air support to a combat ground force slugging it out with the Nazis. "They really saved our asses that day," Hawk recalled, explaining his switch to the Air Force.

With Hawk's Army Air Corps enlistment came his involvement with baseball. Hawk's career from Army machine gunner, to flyboy umpire came in 1950 when he was stationed at Scott Air Force Base where he saw slightly less hazardous duty working the Clinton County Baseball League. It was not long until an overseas military assignment prompted his entry into military and local Japanese College baseball and three appearances at the Far East World Series, armed with only a plate brush and ball-strike indicator, in 1952.

After attending the George Barr Umpire School in Japan, Hawk returned stateside and worked as a Florida State League reserve umpire. Another transfer sent Hawk to California where he worked high school, college, and semi-pro ball before being sent half a world away where he worked baseball in Okinawa from 1960-64. A highlight of Hawk's Okinawa tour was his assignment to the Detroit Tigers vs. Military All-Stars game in 1961. After Hawk conquered Okinawa, he returned to California and a successful high school and college career where he was selected to work the CIF Baseball Championships. A quick tour in Vietnam was followed by more California baseball and another CIF Championship assignment.

Hawk finally made it to Colorado in 1976 and distinguished himself as a top arbiter working high school and Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference baseball. For many years Hawk was a fixture in the Men's Senior Baseball League as well as local legion baseball. In 1992, Hawk was drafted again into international service working Olympic Baseball when Team USA battled Team Cuba at Denver's Mile High Stadium in front of a record crowd of over 66,000.

On a much smaller scale, but equally as important, Hawk worked high school playoffs in virtually every league in the Denver Metro Area for over 25 years. He served as the Denver Director for CHSBUA, was a valuable clinician at CHSBUA Master Clinics, and was a "Top Sergeant" for many new umpires and got them through their first battle action on the baseball diamond. Hawk is still active as an evaluator for CHSBUA and lives in Aurora with his wife Doris.