

Former SMA Robert E. Hall

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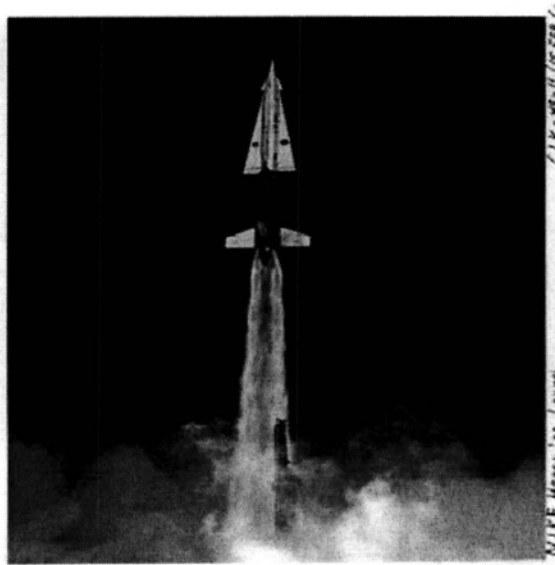
Former SMA Robert E. Hall

Sergeant Major of the Army Robert E. Hall was sworn in as the 11th Sergeant Major of the Army on 21 October 1997 and served until 23 June 2000. A career soldier, SMA Hall has held many leadership positions within the Department of the Army and Unified Command environments.

As Sergeant Major of the Army, Hall served as the Army Chief of Staff's personal advisor on all enlisted-related matters, particularly in areas affecting soldier training and quality of life. The SMA devoted the majority of his time to traveling throughout the Army observing training, and talking to soldiers and their families. He sat on a wide variety of councils and boards that made decisions affecting enlisted soldiers and their families and was routinely invited to testify before Congress.

SMA Hall was born in Gaffney, South Carolina, on May 31, 1947. Raised around a table where military service was expected, he regularly interacted with male role models who would later shape his future. His father a veteran of World War II received a battle field commission, a Silver Star and a Purple Heart. His uncle was a prisoner in Germany during the war. After graduating from high school he attended Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina. Not to sure which ran out first, the money or the grades, he decided to leave school. With the draft ongoing he knew that it was only a matter of time before he would receive the call. One day when a recruiter came knocking, Hall was sold on becoming an Air Defense Artillery man. His parents drove him fifty miles to Charlotte North Carolina where he took his first bus ride to basic training.

He entered the Army in February 1968 and attended basic training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Committee Members were responsible for conducting all of the training and the Drill Sergeants were primarily responsible for the discipline of the Soldiers and the movement to the training sites. Hall was not the model Soldier but quickly learned to do what he was told and follow instructions. Upon graduating basic training he attended advanced individual training at Fort Bliss, Texas learning the trade of an “air defender”. He was trained on the Nike Hercules system, designed to shoot down high flying Russian aircraft during the cold war. After his training he was confident that he knew the basics of Soldiering and was ready to go on to his first assignment.



Nike Hercules

(SAM-N-25) (MIM-14A-B)

His first assignment was Fort Storey, Virginia. Private First Class Hall was made an acting sergeant after only nine months. The NCOs of his unit were very proficient with the crew missile and he felt as though he had to struggle to attain their level of proficiency. He began to study his supervisors and identify the traits he would later adapt as his own, and made a mental note of the bad traits that he would not repeat.

Hall was at Fort Story for one year and already an E-5. He was selected as a crewmember for the for the Chaparral Missile system in the newly formed 8th-61st ADA. He returned to Fort Bliss, Texas for a five week transitional course, and then Hall and his unit underwent six months of training at White Sand Missile Range, New Mexico. Not only were Hall and his men learning a new weapon system but they were also learning how to come together as a team, working side by side with the Privates. In 1971 Hall's unit moved to Korea, where they provided short range air defense for 2nd Infantry Division.



Chaparral MIM-72 A-J

In 1977 Hall was D.A. select for Drill Sergeant School. Already a Sergeant First Class, he did not have the desire of becoming a Drill Sergeant. Having served as a squad leader and

platoon sergeant his main desire was becoming a First Sergeant. Little did he know that becoming a First Sergeant would help him achieve his goal. His opinion soon changed as he saw the professionalism of the Drill Sergeants and also recognized that the burden of basic training was shifting from committee group instruction to more drill sergeant involvement.

In 1979 Hall was selected as Drill Sergeant of the year for Fort Bliss and the Army. One of his awards for winning was a one year assignment to TRADOC headquarters staff where he would report directly to the TRADOC CSM. He was only there for a short period of time but was instrumental in the implementation of PLDC. Traditionally Combat Arms and Non Combat Arms Soldiers trained separately. Combat Arms attended Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course and Non Combat Arms attended Primary Leaders Course. The NCO Academy at Fort Stewart, Ga. was testing a new training program in which NCOs from all arms and branches trained together. The TRADOC CSM dispatched Hall to find out what was going on. Hall was impressed with what he saw and notified the TRADOC CSM that he should come to Georgia to see for himself. Upon returning to TRADOC, Hall prepared a staff study on combining the current NCO courses into PLDC, presented it to the TRADOC Deputy Commanding General who agreed with the proposal. While assigned to TRADOC the Army began the First Sergeant Course. Hall participated in the self pace pilot program at Fort Bliss. He completed his studies ahead of the other students and was the first to ever graduate from the new course. He was also selected for promotion to MSG and convinced the TRADOC CSM that he should be a 1SG in Germany.

Hall finally received his First Sergeant job one of his old units 2nd 59th ADA in Germany His battery earned the reputation as the best battery in the battalion winning 13 of the 15 available

streamers for top performance. With a little over one year's time in grade as a MSG, Hall was selected to attend the Sergeant Major's Course. He finished the six month course with high marks and graduated in the top 10% of his class.

He has held a variety of important positions culminating in his assignment as the Sergeant Major of the Army. He previously held the senior enlisted position as Command Sergeant Major of the United States Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Other assignments he held as Command Sergeant Major were: the 1st Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, Fort Stewart, Georgia; Commandant, 24th Infantry Division Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Fort Stewart; the 24th Division Artillery, Saudi Arabia and Iraq; the 2d Infantry Division, Korea; and First U.S. Army, Fort Meade, Maryland.

When he assumed the duties as the SMA the office was vacant for eight months due the previous SMA retired McKinney's improprieties. The first message that SMA Hall had for the force was to keep the faith in the Army's leadership and themselves. Some of his major contributions as SMA include: the development of the Army Value tag and card, and the reinstatement of 50% pay benefit for military personnel who retired after twenty years of service.

On 16 June 1999, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Dennis J. Reimer officially unveiled and presented the Sergeant Major of the Army Flag to the then residing Sergeant Major of the Army, Robert E. Hall. The flag, designed by the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry, was taken from the insignia created in 1966 to distinguish the SMA rank. The flag background is divided diagonally from the upper fly to lower hoist, in scarlet and white, with scarlet uppermost. The insignia of the SMA is centered on the flag with the fringe in yellow, cord and tassels in scarlet and white. The actual flag is 52 by 66 inch size, like the colors of secretarial-level officials and the Chief and

Vice Chief, not 3x4 feet like every other positional color/personal flag in the Army. It also has the scarlet and white cord and tassels standard for the larger size colors.



SMA Hall has demonstrated his personal commitment to the Army and his soldiers as he advanced to positions of higher responsibility. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management from Park College, Parkville, Missouri. Throughout his 32-year career, SMA (retired) Hall has held every key leadership position including: squad leader, 2d Infantry Division, Korea; platoon sergeant, battalion operations sergeant and battalion intelligence sergeant, 1st Armored Division, Germany; first sergeant, B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 59th Air Defense Artillery, Germany; and drill sergeant, Fort Bliss, Texas. His military education includes Drill Sergeant School, Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course, First Sergeants Course, and the Sergeants Major Academy, where he served as an instructor upon graduation from class 26. He also served on the staff of the Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia. His experience and expertise distinguished him as the 1979 Army Drill Sergeant of the Year and selection and induction into the prestigious Sergeant Morales Club and the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the

Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, tenth award of the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with bronze star, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with two bronze stars, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon with numeral 4, the Army Service ribbon, the Overseas Service ribbon with numeral 3, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, the Department of the Army Staff Identification Badge and Drill Sergeant Identification Badge.

References

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