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# ADMIRAL HALL

## THE MAN YOU WANT TO KNOW

story by Kristina Walton



1999: FLYING A COMBAT MISSION AS C.O. OF VFA-87

As a teenager pumping gas at an airport in Texas, Rear Adm. Patrick Hall may not have pictured a future as an accomplished U.S. Naval officer and pilot. It may not have even crossed his mind while studying civil engineering at the University of Texas in the early 1980's.

Yet here he stands with more than 900 carrier arrested landings, 4,300 flight hours, eight deployments, and 30 years of experience under his belt — a man who has become a fighter pilot, strike fighter pilot, executive officer, commanding officer, and, now, the new commander of Carrier Strike Group NINE.

Hall has had a wide variety of career experiences and has served on multiple ship platforms, including the aircraft carriers USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), USS Saratoga (CV 60), USS Forrestal (CV 59), USS America (CV 66), and the fast combat support ship USS Seattle (AOE 3).

"My operational experience has certainly shaped my command style and warfighting beliefs," he said. "My career has been marked with many changes and new experiences. I've learned that new experiences and opportunities bring new challenges and growth as a warfighter and leader."

With all of the personal accolades and accomplishments, Hall still emphasizes that well-trained Sailors are the key to operational success.

"Our people are our most valuable resource," said Hall. "We must invest the time and energy in their training, education and preparation to produce officers and Sailors ready to operate and fight anywhere in the world."

To accomplish this, Hall has three guiding principles

for the commands that comprise Carrier Strike Group NINE: "Take care of yourself and your shipmate; be ready; take care of the ship/squadron."

To do that, he said, Sailors must understand their rate and their role on the ship, as well as the roles they play in the lives of their shipmates. He added that Sailors also need to understand that they have a responsibility to take a leadership role when needed and maintain accountability of their shipmates to keep each other safe.

For Hall, this began with honing his skills as a fighter pilot, and then later on during his first shore tour as an adversary instructor. His role was to "simulate the bad guys" for new pilots so that they could experience what it would be like to fight enemy pilots in a real-life situation. Even then, Hall said he didn't picture himself being in the Navy for 30 years.

"In this squadron [of adversary instructors], we had about 25 officers," said Hall. "I guarantee you none of us looked at each other and thought 'he's going to be an admiral someday.' None of us ever pictured ourselves being flag officers. You've got to be kidding me; we were all hoping just to make lieutenant!"

Hall credits part of his success to the fact that he was able to work around officers who were very professional at that point in his career.

"You learn a lot from the people you work with," said Hall. "What kept me in the Navy was that I had such a good time with the people that I worked with and the people that I worked for. We were all about getting the job done. It's pretty phenomenal to think that six of those 25 officers became flag officers in the Navy, considering that the statistics say only 1 percent of Navy captains become flag officers."



2009: KICKING OFF A SILVERTIPS HOCKEY GAME IN EVERETT

Hall says his current leadership style has been shaped not only by his past experiences as a leader, but also by experiencing an assortment of leadership styles from those with whom he has served.

"I have had the pleasure to work with some extremely gifted leaders and mentors," he said. "I have also learned some valuable lessons from leaders that struggled. It's important to see both if we are to grow as individuals and leaders."

Hall believes he has learned equally important lessons from both the good and the bad.

"Early in my career, I had leaders that struggled with certain things," said Hall. "I watched them and how they dealt with certain situations, and I thought there was a better way of doing it."

Hall believes every leader, good or bad, can serve as an example for Sailors.

"You may not like the individual you work for at the time, but there is always something that can be learned from your situation, whether it's how to do things or how not to do them the next time around," Hall said.

He also recalled a commanding officer he had early on who had a great positive influence on his life and his career.

"He was not easy on me, but continued to push me in all areas, whether it was in the airplane or on the ground," said Hall. "He taught me to be ready for each and every opportunity that presents itself and make sure you take care of the people who make it happen every day."

Hall received positive guidance from another chain of command early in his career that also influenced his current style of leadership.

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE  
AND EVERYTHING  
ELSE WILL WORK ITSELF OUT**

"They knew how to take whatever phase of training we were in, or whatever operation we were in, and really motivate people to do or be the best they could be using each and every event that came up," said Hall. "There was never any event that was too small to be considered an important learning experience. By doing that, they developed an ethos in their squadron or their ship."

One thing he recalls taking from that chain of command and later incorporating at other commands was that leadership should take responsibility for everything—positive and negative—that happens with their crew.

"They took ownership of everything that was going on," said Hall. "If things went well, the credit belonged to the crew. If things went poorly, then the head person took responsibility for not being properly prepared for that evolution."

According to Hall, it is important for junior Sailors to see their bosses lead by example by taking responsibility for their mistakes and learning from them. He said it is not the lack of making mistakes that's important, but that leaders can show their Sailors how to move on from that mistake by owning up to it and planning a better way to do things in the future.

Hall said another ideal he believes is that a leader's role is to put people in a position to excel and then challenge them to exceed their own expectations.

"Honest, relevant feedback is required to ensure each individual understands how they are performing," said Hall. "It's the only way to grow. I was fortunate to have a CO early on in my career who took the time to give me relevant feedback and then show me the way to improve. I wouldn't be here today without that guidance 20 years ago."

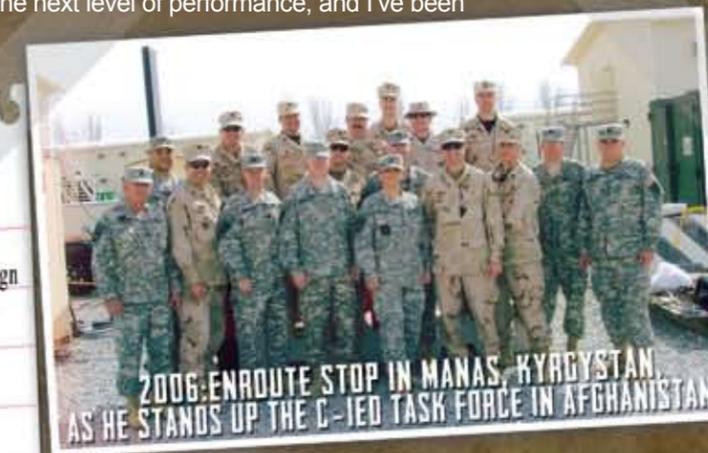
Another important thing Hall learned as an officer and a leader was to listen to people with more experience, regardless of rank.

"Sometimes as officers, there's a thought process that says 'Everybody that is beneath me in rank works for me,

so I have to be able to tell them what to do,'" said Hall. "Sometimes, that's not how it works. That officer might be a lieutenant junior grade with five years in the Navy, when the Chief who works under him has 20. We have to remember to listen to experience."

Hall credits much of his leadership experiences to the chiefs he's worked with.

"There is no greater force multiplier than a chief petty officer," said Hall. "All my CPO's had a part in preparing me for future leadership roles. My command master chiefs have been the most talented leaders I have ever had the opportunity to work with. I feel I have learned more about leadership from them than they have from me. The Chief's Mess is the key to getting an organization to the next level of performance, and I've been

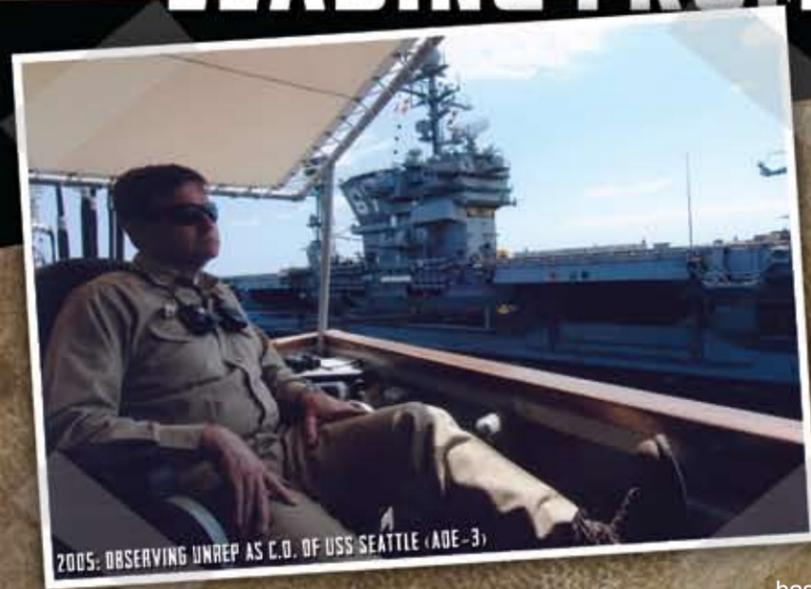


RDML Hall received a Bronze Star and three Combat Valor Awards during the Kosovo campaign while serving as C.O. for the Golden Warriors (VFA-87). He says it was one of his most challenging leadership roles to date as his unit engaged in immediate combat operations.

2006: ENROUTE STOP IN MANAS, KYRGYZSTAN, AS HE STANDS UP THE C-IED TASK FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN

# ADMIRAL HALL

## — LEADING FROM THE FRONT — BUILDING MORALE —



2005: OBSERVING UNREP AS C.O. OF USS SEATTLE (AOE-3)



2005: FLYING WITH HSC-4 WHILE C.O. OF USS SEATTLE (AOE-3)



2010: RETURNING HOME FROM SHIPYARD AS C.O. OF USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN DURING OPIA



2005: THROWING OUT THE FIRST PITCH AT A MARINERS GAME WITH WIFE, GAIL

lucky to see it in action many times.”

In addition to working with leaders he could learn from, the opportunities Hall has taken advantage of have helped him continue to learn and grow as a warfighter and leader as his career progressed.

“One of the biggest things I had to learn to do in order to move forward was change,” said Hall. “I had to go back and re-learn things when I switched from fighter pilot to strike/fighter pilot.”

“As a fighter pilot, you have a very specific focus, but as a strike/fighter pilot you have a lot more to learn and specialize in,” he continued. “I didn’t assume I had all the answers, and I was willing to learn. I showed a lot of the junior officers that you can teach an old dog new tricks.”

New tricks are something Hall believes everyone in the Navy can succeed at as long as they put in the effort.

“You can be effective at everything you do by studying, gaining experience, taking everything as seriously as you can, and being the best you can be with the tools that you have. Use [the knowledge] you have and build upon it.”

A tour that influenced Hall greatly was his tenure as the commanding officer of USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

“One of the things you learn running such a large organization is that you can’t do it all,” he said. “You have to rely on other people to get your message out, so you have to understand what your message is and make sure you put out a clear message to your crew.”

Throughout his time in the Navy, while transitioning from fighter pilot to Commander of Carrier Strike Group NINE, Hall’s perspective

has continued to change and broaden along with his experiences.

During his time as chief of staff for Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76), he participated in two major disaster relief efforts that helped him appreciate the Navy’s role in the safety and security of our people and people around the world. Hall led a team that assisted the victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and those impacted by the 2005 Pakistan earthquake that killed more than 75,000 people.

“It was an incredible learning experience working with other government organizations and seeing how they operate,” said Hall about his Katrina experience. “After about a month doing that, we spent a few months at home before the earthquake hit Pakistan. We got to see first-hand what our Army brethren were doing to help with relief efforts. After that, we went home again, reset, and found ourselves on the way to Afghanistan a couple months later.”

Afghanistan presented yet another new experience, where Hall found himself setting up a Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) task force similar to one already in action in Iraq. During this time, he had the chance to meet a lot of people who had done multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as witness what it was really like working in the field. Hall said this gave him a greater appreciation of what our fellow service members in other branches of the U.S. military do in the Middle East and also gave him a better understanding of what role Sailors play in their lives.

“I always tried to tell them that our culture was such a huge force multiplier for the guys over there,” he said. “Being the senior guy, a lot of times Sailors would come talk to me. Sometimes it would be for advice, other times it would be just because I was someone from the Navy to talk to.”

Hall explained that one of the most valuable things Soldiers and Sailors had in common was how pliable they both are. Hall said that

in both the Army and Navy cultures, people often get assigned a job they weren’t trained for and have to learn as they go. He explained that Sailors have the ability to be flexible and possess a willingness to work outside their usual comfort zone – which is a precious and valued commodity downrange.

“Many Sailors would show up to these C-IED units and not be assigned to the job they thought they were going to do,” he said. “They felt like they’d been forgotten by the Navy. Of course, they hadn’t been, but I told them, ‘Just do the best job you can. These guys need your help, and you’re hugely valuable. You can help any organization that’s here if you give enough leeway to how you do business.’”

Hall also credits his family for his success as a leader because they helped him understand and appreciate the sacrifices Sailors and their families make for our country.

“I’ve been married to my wife for 30 years,” said Hall. “We have two children—a daughter who is 28, and a son who is 25. I think in a way, it gave me a sense of stability that others didn’t have, knowing that I always had a family at home, no matter what. It gives you a greater appreciation of the sacrifices your children and your spouse make, with moving and separation, and all the other challenges that come with our lifestyle.”

Hall said that, as a leader, it’s important to understand things from a family’s standpoint and to appreciate the sacrifices people make. The way in which a family acclimates to the military lifestyle can potentially dictate the career paths of Sailors.

“It takes a very unique individual to put up with a Sailor, just because of the time they spend away from home,” he said. “They have to be a very strong individual to survive that, especially with children. Our families don’t get a paycheck to put up with what we do. They don’t train to become families. They have to deal with the situation as it comes.”

Hall said his wife’s volunteer work with the Family Readiness Group (FRG) and junior Sailors has helped him reach out to the families of his Sailors.

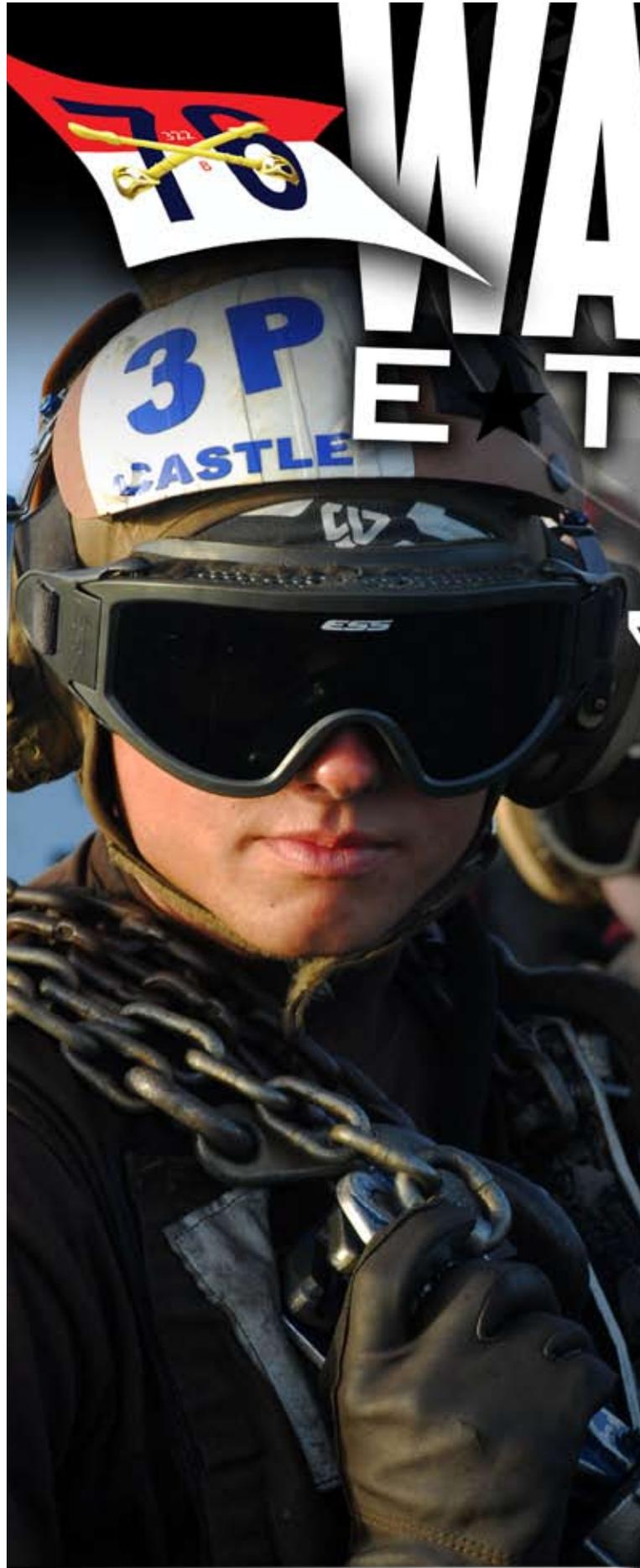
“My wife is a much more empathetic person than I am,” said Hall. “She has a much higher emotional IQ than I do, and she looks at things from a family perspective and tells me, ‘Hey, that’s not going to work because it’s going to have a lot of impact on the families.’ She’s also very good about letting families know that their input will get back to senior leadership, and she encourages me to come to many of the [FRG] meetings so families can hear things first hand. It’s very eye opening.”

Hall’s warfighting and leadership style has been molded by many people and events in his life, from his wife and children at home to the thousands of Sailors and servicemember she has been stationed with in his career. Whether it was participating in relief efforts around the world, flying combat missions in Kosovo, or even being an XO for a ship in dry dock, Hall conveyed that each and every job had been a new challenge for him and that every one of them has given him something to carry forward.

Sailors in Carrier Strike Group NINE can have the utmost confidence in their newest leader and warrior as they push ahead into future operations. Rear Adm. Hall’s vast experience, positive outlook and genuine concern for his Sailors give us much to look forward to in the years to come.

# WARRIOR

## P E T H O S



“Every warrior virtue proceeds from this - courage, selflessness, love of and loyalty to one’s comrades, patience, self-command, the will to endure adversity. It all comes from the hunting band’s need to survive.”

*STEVEN PRESSFIELD*



USS RONALD REAGAN

SAILORS HELPING SAILORS. ONE TEAM. ONE FIGHT.