

## In Memoriam: Fred W. Hall, Jr. '41

**A decorated war hero, he was a devoted husband and father, respected attorney and community leader**

SERIES:

[UNH MAGAZINE](#)

[SPRING 2017](#)

Tuesday, April 4, 2017



Like many of his generation, Fred Hall rarely spoke about his military service in World War II. “As far as war stories go, he really didn’t share any,” says his son John ’83. That changed in 1988 when historian Stephen Ambrose convinced Hall to provide an account of his experiences

on D-Day in Normandy. When Ambrose later asked him to continue his story through the end of the war, Hall decided the time had come to write about his service for future generations.

The result was a detailed account that began when he was inducted into the Army three days after Pearl Harbor and continued to the war’s end in 1945. He served in the 16th Infantry, seeing action in eight campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and France.

Much of Hall’s memoir is heartrending. A fellow lieutenant was

[SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNH TODAY NEWSLETTER](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY RSS](#)

### RELATED LINKS

**In Memoriam: Arthur Richard DiMambro '51**

**In Memoriam: Guy Richard Knudsen '78**

**In Memoriam: Amos R. Townsend '52**

**In Memoriam: Doris Paradis Hayden '30**

killed beside him as they conferred while sheltering in tall grass in North Africa. Of Normandy, where he was among the first to land on Omaha Beach, he wrote, “And the noise, always the noise, naval gun fire, small arms, artillery and mortar fire, aircraft overhead, engine noises, the shouting and the cries of the wounded, no wonder some people couldn’t handle it.” In 1982, Fred and his late wife Jane (Coe) Hall '39 visited France and walked on Omaha Beach where he had fought his way ashore 38 years previously. “It was,” he notes in his memoir, “soon enough to return.”

Hall was awarded many medals and commendations for his service, including a combat infantry badge, two silver stars, three bronze stars and the French Croix de Guerre. After the war he joined the Army Reserve, returned to active duty during the Korean War, and retired in 1966 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He received the Army’s Outstanding Civilian Service Award and was named a distinguished member of the 16th Infantry Regiment in 1994. In recognition of his exemplary service in France, in 2012 the French government named Hall a Chevalier de l’Ordre de la Legion d’Honneur, the country’s highest honor.

After the war, Hall attended the University of Michigan Law School, graduating in 1948. He was a partner for 60 years in the Rochester, N.H., law firm Cooper, Hall, Whittum & Shillaber (originally Cooper, Hall & Shillaber), a member of the American Bar Association, past president of the New Hampshire Bar Association, and active in Republican politics. Hall was elected to the office of solicitor in both Strafford County and the city of Rochester. He was a charter member of the Rochester Rotary Club and the city’s Citizen of the Year in 2007. A strong supporter of UNH, he chaired the USNH board of trustees during the turbulent '60s and he and Jane went on to establish the Coe-Hall Fund at the UNH Foundation.

Paul O'Leary, former head of the NH State Police, was a close friend of Hall's for 60 years. The men came from very different backgrounds and rose to prominence in their different professions. Their long friendship was testament to Hall's "ability to get along with people from all walks of life," says O'Leary.

Fred enjoyed following the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots, says John, and he and Jane were loyal fans of UNH football, always sitting on the 50-yard line. A highlight of every game was tailgating with friends and chatting with fellow alumni.

Hall was part of an alumni legacy at UNH that, in addition to John, includes his father Fred W. Hall, Sr., class of 1918, and grandson Blake McGurty '05. UNH awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1974, and the alumni association named him winner of the Pettee Medal, its highest honor, in 1996.

Hall returned to Normandy for the 60th anniversary of D-Day in 2004 accompanied by John, daughter Susan and daughter-in-law Renee. The group attended a service at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial at Colleville-sur-Mer. Standing on an overlook, Fred pointed out where he had crossed the open beach under heavy fire. For a family that had only learned the extent of his war experiences from his memoir, the experience was "moving beyond words," remembers John.

The Halls were married for 54 years, until Jane's death in 2004. In addition to John, Fred is survived by three daughters, Marcella Prachyl, Susan Collins and Diane Moler.

Although his mind remained sharp to the end and he was able to live at home with the help of caregivers, the years eventually took their toll on Fred's physical health, says John. He passed away on January 20 at age 96.

## Originally published in UNH Magazine [Spring 2017 Issue](#)

WRITTEN Karen Tongue Hammond '64 | UNH Magazine

BY:

UNH MAGAZINE SPRING 2017

### RELATED ARTICLES



**9,593**

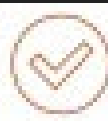
donors



**\$1.9M+**

raised

(Including matching  
and bonus funds)



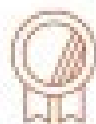
**36**

area challenges  
achieved



**320**

designations  
supported



### Leaderboard Winners

#### COLLEGES

1. College of Health and Human Services
2. Paul College of Business and Economics

#### ATHLETICS

1. Skiing
2. Football
3. Swimming and Diving

#### UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

1. Northeast Passage
2. Cooperative Extension
3. Student Emergency

June 17, 2020 | DONORS

# Best Year Yet



July 15, 2020 | CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

## Call for Wildcat Projects

---



October 20, 2020 | COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

# Outdoor Renaissance

---



**University of New Hampshire**

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: [unhtoday.editor@unh.edu](mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu).

**MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION**  **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234  
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

