

# **U.S. Army Highlights Success of SIUE ROTC Cadet with Hearing Impairment**

by Megan Wieser  
March 24 2021 3:07 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Army ROTC Cadet Paige Hall has never let her hearing impairment prevent her from pursuing her dreams and standing out as a high achieving student and leader.

Hall is a junior pre-pharmacy major from Washington, Mo. She is currently a participating cadet, with hopes of being contracted upon a favorable medical review.

In a recent feature shared by the U.S. Army, Hall's perseverance, leadership strengths and positive attitude were highlighted. Written by Michael Maddox and posted Monday, March 22, the article follows.

“Hearing impaired Cadet has aspirations of one day becoming an Army officer”

Being a soldier, a leader, means having the skills to adapt and overcome obstacles to achieve success in any situation. Every ROTC cadet faces their own challenges, and for Cadet Paige Hall her hearing impairment could be seen as one by some – but not to her.

Hall, who is a pharmacy major, has had hearing loss since she was three-years-old and has been using hearing aids ever since. Thanks to being diagnosed at such an early age and learning to adapt, she has been able to take part in ROTC at SIUE.

She chose to start taking ROTC, because she thought it would accent the skills needed to be a pharmacist.

“I knew I would be needing excellent leadership skills as well as other skills for pharmacy school, so I decided to join the ROTC program due to learning that they offer scholarship and volunteer opportunities, help improve physical fitness, leadership skills and discipline,” she explained. “So far, ROTC has taught me that everyone can be a leader.”

“I know for a fact that ROTC has bettered me as a person by teaching me how to communicate with others,” Hall added. “I also feel they bettered me as a person and a leader by having several volunteering opportunities and helping me go outside of my comfort zone.”

The Washington, Mo. native said that while hearing loss presents its own obstacles, she has been able to use it to push herself to take on any challenge.

“I have always had challenges due to my hearing loss, but my parents raised me so that none of those challenges would affect me and my future. This may involve a little more studying, or asking more questions, but I have been able to overcome all of these obstacles to get me where I am today,” she explained.

Hall added that her hearing impairment has led to a life with no regrets.

“I have always had ups and downs when it comes to my hearing impairment, but if I didn't have this, I believe my life would have looked very different. I wouldn't have met some of my closest friends, and I wouldn't have gone to the same school district when I was younger, from elementary through high school,” she said.

It's those experiences that help her inspire others in and out of ROTC.

"I believe that I bring positivity to other cadets while being in the ROTC program as a STEM major. I like being able to show people that I can be a STEM major and an Army ROTC cadet at the same time. I believe this encourages other people to consider joining the program, no matter their major," she said.

Lt. Col. Timothy Clark, professor of military science at SIUE, said Hall does exactly that, and with extra enthusiasm that shows.

"Paige comes to everything and 'gets it' - that this is a team sport and a hands-on contact sport. You have to be present and give your best to get the most out of it," he shared. "While other non-contracted cadets in simpler degree paths quit or skip events, she is reliable and always has a great attitude. Others are drawn to her naturally, though she probably would describe herself as quiet and reserved. I have seen the positive attitude that results within any squad she is assigned."

Currently, Hall is a participating Cadet, but both she and the ROTC staff hope that status will change in the future if her medical review returns favorable.

"We hope to get Cadet Hall through her medical review and contract her. However, if ROTC cannot gain a waiver, we have also helped her link up with AMEDD recruiters for a future direct commission," Clark said. "She has told me after being around ROTC, being visited by alumni or other military leaders, that she absolutely knows she wants to be an Army pharmacist. We are always linked in with AMEDD recruiters to help us tell their story and our story to those low-density student fields. Meeting with them at some leadership labs last year and more discussions this year helped endear her to both ROTC and the Army."

Clark said along with everything else, Hall is also one of the ROTC's biggest promoters on campus.

"Paige brings the message to many of those intensely focused and fast-track minded students that No. 1, ROTC is a benefit to everyone - regardless of race, gender or even with a handicap. No. 2, ROTC doesn't interfere but amplifies their college experience, making them competitive for the next level," he explained. "No. 3, she breaks down stereotypes of what the average person thinks the Army experience is.

"It's not drill sergeants screaming or a rigid mold that you are forced into. And No. 4, she displays that for the lower density and difficult STEM majors, and varsity athletes, Army ROTC flexes to ensure you succeed in your primary mission - college graduation, because the Cadre know there is no 'Lieutenant Hall' until there is 'College Graduate,

Pharmacist Hall,' or whatever STEM, nursing, or upper level professional degree path a student may be in.”

Hall is hopeful she will receive a medical waiver, but if not, she plans to continue to stay positive.

“Don’t let anything get in the way of what you want to do in life. There will be obstacles and people who will tell you that you cannot succeed, but that’s when you push yourself to be the best that you can be and prove them wrong,” she said. “The motto I have always gone by in life is, if you want something bad enough, you will push through every obstacle you come across to get it.”

Army ROTC is one of the best leadership courses in the country and is part of your college curriculum. Through classes and field training, Army ROTC provides you with the tools to become an Army Officer without interfering with your other classes. ROTC also provides you with discipline and money for tuition while enhancing your college experience.

For more information on the SIUE Army ROTC program, visit [siue.edu/rotc](http://siue.edu/rotc).

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of nearly 13,000.

SIUE Army ROTC Cadet Paige Hall.