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MADISON

Military historian selected

More than 10 years after University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate Stephen Ambrose set up a fund to hire a military history professor at his alma mater, the school is finally fulfilling the late historian's vision.

Ambrose, who wrote the book "Band of Brothers" and grew up in Whitewater, established an endowment for the Ambrose-Hesseltine Chair in U.S. Military History in 1998. When he died in 2002, the UW Foundation received about \$500,000. The endowment reached \$1.2 million in June, although it likely has decreased since then.

The delay in hiring provoked some controversy a few years ago, with critics suggesting the university was purposely avoiding hiring a military historian. But officials said they first needed enough money in the endowment and a solid applicant pool.

Officials recently hired Major John Hall, who will join the history department in July as an assistant professor.

A native of Wisconsin, Hall received his undergraduate education at the U.S. Military Academy before embarking on a career in the Army, where he has served 16 years. Meanwhile, he earned a doctorate in history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2007.

This year, Harvard University Press will publish his new book, "Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War."

Hall will start teaching in the fall semester. UW-Madison officials said Hall emerged as the strongest candidate during a yearlong search that assessed a pool of approximately 35 applicants ranging from full professors to graduate students completing their dissertations.

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