

Weather

Today: Sunny. High 50. Low 34-36. Winds west 10-15 mph. Tuesday: Partly sunny. High around 50. Winds light. Yesterday: Temperature range 21-39. Details on Page B2.

The Washington

110TH YEAR

No. 10

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1986

Nicaragua Holding American as Spy

Prisoner Said to Be Congressman's Brother

By Edward Cody
Washington Post Foreign Service

MANAGUA, Nicaragua, Dec. 14—The Nicaraguan government has arrested as a suspected spy an American who is believed to be an Ohio congressman's brother.

The American, whose U.S. passport identified him as Sam Nesley Hall, 49, was arrested Friday morning near the Punta Huete military airfield, about 12 miles north of Managua, Sandinista officials announced Saturday night.

A spokesman for Rep. Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio) said today he believes the captive is Hall's brother, a self-styled counterterrorism expert who the aide said has been a mercenary in Angola and Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

Hall, who has yet to be charged formally, joined Eugene Hasenfus as a prisoner of the Sandinistas, accused of illegal activities in Nicaragua in support of Reagan administration policy against the Managua government. Hasenfus, from Marinette, Wis., was sentenced Nov. 15 to a 30-year prison term for his ac-

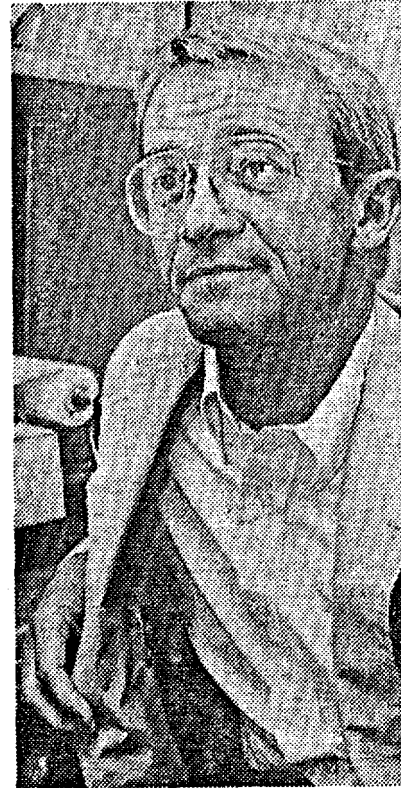
knowledgeable role in delivering arms to U.S.-financed anti-Sandinista forces.

The Reagan administration denies any connection to the rebel supply operation.

State Department spokesman Bruce Ammerman, said it is impossible to identify the detainee or his job because the Sandinista government has refused to permit the U.S. consul general in Managua to visit him. Ammerman said he had no information on whether a Sam Hall worked for any part of the U.S. government.

Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto told reporters Saturday night that Hall admitted spying on Sandinista targets for a previously unheard-of private U.S. group called the Phoenix Battalion. There was no description of this group or its leadership, nor whether Hall's claim about it was being taken seriously by Sandinista authorities.

D'Escoto said Hall was captured with sketches and maps hidden in his socks. Hall first claimed to be a writer, the minister related, but lat-



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Sam Hall, brother of Rep. Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio) and thought to be captive, in 1985 photo.

er admitted that he was gathering intelligence for the private group.

According to D'Escoto, Hall said the Phoenix Battalion specializes in military espionage in consonance with U.S. policy.

The Punta Huete airfield was constructed during the past two

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