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## AGGIE GOODBULL

# Aggie Leads Rescue Of Miners

By Vimal Patel  
Bryan-College Station Eagle



On Oct. 30, Texas A&M University hosted and honored Greg Hall '82 for his work in helping to rescue 33 Chilean miners trapped 2,000 below Earth's surface. Hall is pictured above with his wife, Angie, while reviewing March-in and at left with A&M President Dr. R. Bowen Loftin '71 during a special presentation on Kyle Field.

A 28-inch hole that 33 Chilean miners started climbing out of late on Oct. 12 from 2,000 feet beneath the Earth's surface was drilled with equipment owned by an Aggie who has done business in the country for 25 years.

"It's kind of like my second home," said **Gregory Hall**, a Class of 1982 engineering student, in a telephone interview as he drove home to Cypress from the airport after spending 10 days at the San Jose Mine site. "I was glad I was able to give something back for the country that was so good to me."

Hall's role was major: He says he devised Plan B, one of three simultaneous drilling plans to reach the miners at the center of the drama that has captivated international audiences following the Aug. 5 mine collapse.

"Plan A was drilling an elevator shaft, but just extremely time consuming, and Plan C was an oil field rig that wasn't used to that hard rock," Hall said of the other two simultaneous drilling efforts. If Plan B failed, he said, it would have taken until

December, as originally estimated, to reach the miners.

"He called the drilling mission his most difficult in his 25 years in the mineral exploration industry. Technical challenges surfaced that shook his faith in success a few times, he said.

"You normally never drill a 28-inch hole in that hard of a rock with as many curvatures you have to go around," he said. "You'd abandon the hole and build another one. But we knew as long as we followed a pilot hole that was drilled that we'd get to the miners. ... We had the very best equipment in the world."

It was his equipment that also carried the note several weeks ago from the miners that let the world know they were alive and well. "I tried to take it, but the Chilean government took it away from me," Hall said.

Human challenges popped up as well. He would not visit the place where family members of the trapped men gathered, because he needed to stay focused on the mission, he said.

"I was afraid that if my focus got off the technical work and on the emotional side, I would make a mistake and those miners would suffer," he said.

Hall owns three companies—Drillers Supply International Houston, DSI American Manufacturing in Minnesota and Drillers Supply SA in Chile. The latter two are Aggie 100 companies, which recognize the fastest growing Aggie-owned businesses.

He said he learned skills in the Corps of Cadets as a commanding officer in Squadron 11 and a member of the Fish Drill Team that helped him stay focused and confident. He has two kids at A&M, freshman Andrew and senior Jacqueline, both in the Mays Business School.

"Texas A&M is a big tradition in our family," Hall said. "One of the things I learned in the Corps of Cadets is never quitting in life."

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