



## The Short Life of Harry Francis Hall

## 1891 - 1918



Hall Family circa 1912, Copyright Amanda Hall

# By Amanda Hall





Harry Francis Hall was born on 22 October 1891 in Portfield, Chichester. His father Harry William Hall was a painter born in Chichester and his mother Ellen Hall (nee Jackson) was born in West Dean, near Chichester.

In 1901 Harry Francis was nine years of age and was living with his parents and four siblings at 106 Oving Road, Chichester.

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1901 Census RG13 piece 969 folio 52 page 19 West Sussex Records Office

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1911 Census Reference RG14PN5405 RG78PN245 RD86 SD1 ED4 SN161 www.ancestry.co.uk

By 1911 Harry Francis Hall was 19 years of age, living with his parents and five siblings at 6 St James Road, Chichester. He worked at Shippams of Chichester and his occupation was recorded as factory potted meats. His younger brother Frederick William, my grandfather was also working at Shippams, his occupation is recorded as labelling.

Shippams was a family run business founded in 1786 by Charles Shippam who opened a grocery business in Westgate, Chichester which later moved to 48 East Street. As the reputation of Shippams sausages grew and they supplied an increasing market, they built their first factory in 1892 at 48 East Street. In the 1890's they began making potted meats and pastes which were cooked and minced before being put into earthenware jars.









Hall Family circa 1912, Copyright Amanda Hall Top line (left to right): Alice Eveline Hall, Harry Francis Hall, Edith Gertrude Hall, Alfred John Hall Bottom line (left to right): Frederick William Hall, Harry William Hall, Achibald Hall, Ellen

Bottom line (left to right): Frederick William Hall, Harry William Hall, Achibald Hall, Ellen Hall, Edward Reginald Hall

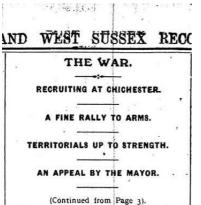
This above picture shows Harry William Hall, his wife Ellen and their children. Harry Francis Hall is standing at the back between his two older sisters. Alfred John Hall is standing at the back on the right; served in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment during World War 1. My grandfather Frederick William Hall is at the front on the left leaning on his father, served in the Royal Engineers during World War 1. Both Alfred and Frederick survived the War.

There are no surviving photographs of Harry Francis Hall in uniform, although in the letters later detailed in this Short life of Harry Francis Hall, Harry writes about sending photos home. I am aware that Harry did indeed send a photo of himself to his mother Ellen Hall; unfortunately this photo no longer survives within the Hall family.









(Continued from Page 3). There was a fine rally of recruits at Chichester on Monday. Throughout the day small groups of young men were to be seen making their way to the Darracks, where the authorities had one of the buisest days of their lives. It seemed that at last the appeal of Lord Kitchener for more men had really made an impression. Early in the morning about thirty employees from Messrs. Shippam's Factory went to the Barracks in a body. The firm had made them a generous offer of an allowance of tos. a week all the time they remain on active ser-vice. Most of them joined the 7th Battalion, which is being trained at Colchester, but one or two failed to get accepted owing to their youth, and they went away quite dejected because they could not go to the front. Another party of nearly forty recruits

could not go to the front. Another party of nearly forty recruits arrived in the city during the morning from the Boxgrove district including many who have been employed on the Goodwood Estate. Until Monday recruiting at Chichester had been far from brisk, but the yield on this day was well over a hundred from the city and the immediate district alone. A large number of others came in from more distant areas. This encouraging result was in a large measure due others came in from more distant areas. This encouraging result was in a large measure due to the appointment of hon, recruiting officers for various parts, who have been most active in their efforts to persuade young men to enlist. The list of hon. recruiting officers for this dis-trict is as follows:— Arundel: Mr. R. F. Mitchell. Aldingbourne, Barnham and Eastergate : Captain W. A. Grant, Westergate House. Bognor: Colonel H. D. Fryer, J.P., Park Road, Bognor. Bosham and Fishbourne: Mr. H. Selwyn Lloyd, Manor House, Bosham. Chichester: Alderman G. M. Turnbull, J.P., Donnington: Mr. A. C. Harris, Donnington Manor.

Manor Funtington, Mr. F. Baring Du Pre, J.P.,

Oakwood

Funtington, Mr. F. Baring Du Pre, J.P., Oakwood. Lavant: Sir James Turing. Littlehampton: Mr. A. J. Constable. Selsey, East and West Wittering. Earnley, Birdham and Itchenor: Mr. Archibald Hamil-ton, Paisley Cottage. Selsey, Sidlesham: Dr. Andre. Stoughton and Compton: Mr. H. Christy, Lordington. Singleton, West Dean and East Dean: The Rev. C. Leveson-Gower, Singleton. Sindon, Madehurst, and Walberton: Mr. H. Wootton Isaacson, Slindon House Southbourne and Chidham: Mr. L. G. Wil-liams, Beach House, Southbourne. Westhampnett: Mr. G. Rusbridger, Wester-ton, Westhampnett. All the above named gentlemen will be pleased to give any assistance in their power to would-be recruits.

recruits.

The Manuals Asses

Report of Recruitment at Chichester Barracks, Chichester Observer and West Sussex Recorder, 2 September 1914 West Sussex Records Office On 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany. Harry Francis enlisted into the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment on 30 August 1914, for three years or the duration of the War. He signed up with a group of work friends, including George Farndale (spelt as Farndell by Harry) who he later mentions in his letters, from Shippams. They went to the Barracks in Broyle Road in Chichester. Their recruitment was recorded in The Chichester Observer and West Sussex Recorder on Wednesday 2 September 1914.

Harry Francis's service record survives at The National Archives confirming his enlistment date as 30 November 1914.

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SHORT SE	RVICE.
(One year with the	e Coloura.)
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(	1. Harry Flanger. H. All.
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First Page of Harry Francis Hall Service File, British Army WW1 Service Records 1914 -1920 www.ancestry.co.uk





Harry Francis Hall and a number of his work colleagues from Shippams wrote back to Alfred Ernest Cooper Shippam one of the Directors of Shippams during World War 1. This collection of letters has been deposited in the West Sussex Records Office Ref Add Mss 1606.

Add Mss 1606 West Sussex Records Office

gels there we

452 D Company 7th Royal Sussex Reg St Martin Plain Shorncliff Kent 8 October 1914

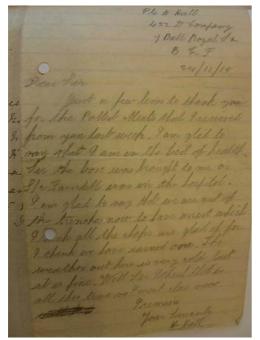
Dear Sir

I thank you very much for your letter that you wrote to mother which was send to me this morning. Sir I have asked the other chaps to send their photo on to you as soon has they has they can has you would like to have them. Sir I am please to say that I am in the best of health and that I am enjoying myself alright. Sir I think we are settled for a time now. The canvas life suits us very much for it is much healthy, but the food is not quite so good as we had at Colchester, but still I expect it will get better as soon as we get settled down. The drills we have now is much more stiffer now than they have been for it is so hilly. We hath to walk about two miles for we starts on drills and by the time we gets there we are nearly worn out, for the hills are very steep. Sir the place where our camp is very pretty, the sea is only about three miles from us so we hath not far to go for a bath. Sir while we were drilling last Tuesday there was eight airplanes passed over our heads. We are having night attacks now about twice a week, and then the fun begins for Farndell and myself are put out scouting, so I think I will try to pass as one. Sir all the other chaps wishes to be remember to you and all the other men and boys. Well Sir I think that is all this time, so I must close now. I remain Your Obedient Servant

H F Hall







Add Mss 1606 West Sussex Records Office

Private H Hall 452 D Company 7th Batt Royal Sx BEF 24 November 1915

#### Dear Sir

Just a few lines to thank you for the potted meats that I received from you last week. I am glad to say that I am in the best of health. Sir the box was brought to me as L/C Farndell was in the hospital. I am glad to say that we are out of the trenches now to have a rest which I think all the chaps are glad of for I think we have earned one. The weather out here is very cold but it is fine. Well Sir I think that is all this time so I must close now.

I remain Yours sincerely H Hall

Add Mss 1606 West Sussex Records Office

Lance Corporal H F Hall 452 D Company 7th Batt Royal Sx BEF 2 January 1916

#### Dear Sir

Just a few lines to let you know that I am in the best of health. I thank you very much for the parcel that I received last week. I am glad to say that I had a very nice time of it at Christmas, I think I had a better time of it than the others did, has I was away at a school going through a course of Trench Mortars, while the others was in the trenches. Sir I believe it was the worst time they ever had by what the chaps tells me, so I can think myself lucky for being away. Well Sir I think that is all this time so I must close now with best wishes for a Happy New year to all at the Factory.

I remain Yours sincerely L/C Hall







In the autumn of 1916 Harry's mother Ellen Hall wrote to Mr Shippam asking for help to find out if Harry was still well. In a letter she wrote to Shippams she mentions why she is worried. She says "a soldier had come to their door and said that Harry was either dead or wounded".

Included in the collection of letters in Add Mss 1606 is a letter that was sent to Harry's commanding officer by Shippams.

O. C. A. Sh Light Inda Battery 36 Infantes Brijade B. Sx. F. Parente of 452 H.F. Hall understand he is sitte kills nde can go p thiffer the deale

O C A 36 Light Mortar Battery 36 Infantry Brigade BFF France

Parents of 452 H F Hall understand he is either killed or wounded can you give me any information.

> Shippam Chichester

Add Mss 1606 West Sussex Records Office

And on the 15 November 1916 Shippam received a reply:

Ernest Shippam Esq. Chichester

15 November 1916

Dear Sir

I am in receipt of your telegram of the 12th inst and have pleasure to inform you that No 452 Pte Hall H F is still at duty with the battery under my command and has been neither wounded nor killed. The address contained in your telegram was insufficient for a telegraphic reply.

Yours faithfully

Capt OC 36th T. M. B.





Harry's mother Ellen Hall wrote to Alfred Shippam to thank him for helping to find out about Harry's wellbeing:

6 St James Road Portfield 22 November 1916 To Mr A E C Shippam

#### Dear Sir

Mr and Mrs Hall wishes to thank Mr Shippam for kindly writing to let them know the latest news of Harry also wishes to say I received a letter from Harry today saying he was quite well and safe.

I am enclosing Harry letter and as Mr Shippam will see Harry had been told of it by his Officers but I had not written to them as I should not have known who to write too but Harry seems to have been upset over it but very thankful it was a sad mistake.

We are grateful to Mr Shippam for his kindness and trouble in sending to let us know and hope you will be soon restored to health again.

I am your sincerely Mrs Hall

Alfred Shippam also wrote to ask if the other men that had enlisted from Shippam's knew anything about Harry. This is the reply that Thomas Budd sent back:

Friday 24 November 1916 Private T Budd no778 B Coy Lewis Gun Section 7 Royal Sussex Regt BEF

#### Dear Sir

Having received the cigarettes you kindly sent out to me by last night's mail I am now writing you these few lines to thank you for the same also for your letter which I received a few days ago. I was very pleased to hear from you. Now you asked me about Hall in your letter but I heard the same out here he is quite well I saw him only a few days ago it rather surprised me I can tell you. I asked him who it was that set the rumour about I should like to know. Well we are faring pretty well out here find it cold the weather holds out fine proper November it is a lot better than what we have been having. Well now Sir I think I must draw to a close this time have not got much to talk about once again thanking you for the cigs.

I remain

Yours sincerely

Tom Budd

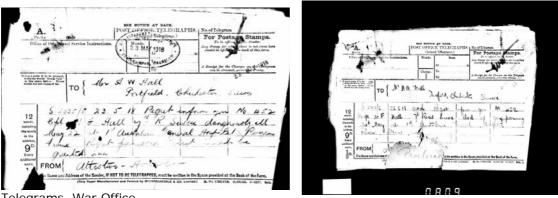
Note Thomas Budd was killed in action on 1 October 1917, buried Monchy British Cemetery, Monchy Le Preux France and is also on The Shippams War Memorial.

On 23 May 1918 Harry's parents received the telegram every parent dreaded. He had been admitted to 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital in



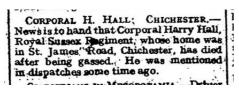


Rouen after having been gassed. They were advised he was dangerously ill and permission was not granted to visit.



Telegrams, War Office, British Army WW1 Service Records 1914 –1920 www.ancestry.co.uk

On 25 May 1918 they received a further telegram informing them that Harry had died from gas poisoning on 24 May 1918.



Harry's death was reported in the Chichester Observer and West Sussex Reporter on 29 May 1918.

Report of Death, Chichester Observer and West Sussex Reporter, 29 May 1918 West Sussex Records Office

CORPORAL M. F. HALL, CHICHESTER. Another Cicestrian, in Corporal Harry Francis Hall, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Hall, of St. James Road. Portfield, has laid down his life for his country, his parents having received the sad news that he died on May 24th of gas poisoning in France, where he had served for three years. Formerly employed by Messrs. C. Shippam, he joined up in August, 1914. There are two brothers serving in France and another in Egypt. Private A. Richardson has written expressing on behalf of many comrades their deepest sympathy. He could truthfully say that Harry was the best man they had in the battery, and it was the opinion of them. all. They retained memories of kindness deceased was never tired doing for any of them. He was missed by officers and men alike. Men had been glad to serve under one who never knew what fear was, and never desorted them under any circumstances. "I pray that God will give you the strength you need to bear it all, and that we may soon have the blessing of peace again." Lieuteriant Neale also wrote that deceased "was one of the most cheerful and coolest men I have met out here, and was loved by overy man in the battery. I had put him in for a medal two or three times, and would certainly have made him a Sergeant at the first opportunity." On the 19 June 1918 there was a longer report of Harry's death detailing that he had died from gas poisoning and that he had been in France for three years of his service.

The report also mentions that Harry worked for Shippams. Private A. Richardson is reported to have written to Harry's parents 'expressing on behalf of many comrades their deepest sympathy, he could truthfully say that Harry was the best man they had in the battery, and it was the opinion of them all'.

Lieutenant Neale also wrote 'that deceased was one of the most cheerful and coolest men I have met out here, and was loved by every man in the battery'.

Chichester Observer and West Sussex Reporter, 19 June 1918 West Sussex Records Office





George Farndale also worked for Shippams, he joined up at the same time as Harry. He wrote to Alfred Ernest Shippam after learning of Harry's death on 8 June 1918.

"I am very very sorry to hear of the death of Harry Hall, for he was a great chum of mine, and living so close together, too for so many years, will you express my sincere sympathy to his parents if you so meet them.

He must must suffered terribly, because I happen to be a gas specialist, and knowing the symptoms of gas, stages when it takes effect, I am certain, it must have been, an awfully hard time for him. Surely nothing can be more terrible than gas, I have no doubt, people often wonder, how when all the precautions are taken, as we have done, how it is fellows still get gas. It is certainly amazing the number that do get gassed, during a tour in the trenches. But then gas, is an easy thing to placed about, in a little piece of time.

Picture at night time, shells are going over your head and bursting perhaps a mile away, you wouldn't take any notice of it for sure. But they are gas shells, although you cannot possibly say so, until the gas cloud as been formed behind, and the wind drifts it back to you. Then before you know theres gas you must smell it, that is the only way to detect it, some sniff to long, some think it is a little which won't hurt, and the trouble is caused. Other times we have no chance, the shell pitched close to you, you duck, the gas forms at once, you are caught napping. So the war go on."



Harry is remembered on four War memorials in Chichester. The Chichester War Memorial in Litten Gardens, St Pancras, in The Memorial Chapel of The Royal Sussex Regiment in Chichester Cathedral.

The Shippams War Memorial, now in the Basil Shippam Centre in Tozer Way, Chichester. The memorial was moved after the closure of the Shippam factory and offices in East Street, Chichester.

The Portfield War Memorial, now located in the porch of St George's Church Rumboldswhyke in Cleveland Road, Chichester, after the closure of Portfield Church, Church Lane, Chichester circa 1980.

Shippams War Memorial, Basil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, Copyright Amanda Hall





The date on Harry's grave in St Sever Cemetery Rouen, France, is 22 May 1918 although his actual date of

Harry is also recorded on his paternal

Portfield Cemetery, Chichester which states the correct date of death as 24

Grandmother's gravestone in

death is 24 May 1918.

May 1918.



Harry is buried in St Sever Cemetery Rouen, France. On visiting Harry's grave for the first time, I saw there was a discrepancy between the date of death on Harry's headstone, compared to the dates on the telegrams sent to Harry's parents and the reports in the Chichester Observer and West Sussex Reporter.



Harry Francis Hall Gravestone St Sever Cemetery Rouen, France, Copyright Amanda Hall



Mrs Amanda Hall

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Enquiries Section Tel: + 44 (0) 1628 507200 Fax: + 44 (0) 1628 771208 Email: casually.enq@cwgc.org

After some correspondence with the Commonwealth War \_\_\_\_\_ Graves Commission and sending supporting evidence from his service file and his death certificate also confirming the 24 May 1918 as his date of death, they agreed to amend his date of death on the roll of honour database and in due course to replace his \_\_\_\_\_ headstone.

Our Ref: EF 02617 - 66679 28 February 2012

Dear Mrs Hall

I am pleased to advise you that our Records Section will shortly amend our database to record his date of death as 24th May 1918. The amendment will also be reflected on our website in due course, however please note that this may take a little while, due to the high volume of work currently being undertaken by our offices. At such point in the future when the headstone requires replacement it will, of course, be engraved with the amended date.

In closing therefore, I trust this is satisfactory and thank you again for bringing this to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Julie Somay Enquiries Administrator

> 2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 7DX, United Kingdom Tel: + 44 (0) 1628 507200 Fax: + 44 (0) 1628 771208 Website: www.cwgc.org

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Letter, 28 February 2012, Copyright Amanda Hall





### **References**

### <u>Newspapers</u>

Chichester Observer and West Sussex Reporter, West Sussex Records Office

### Websites

Ancestry

www.ancestry.co.uk

www.cwgc.org

**Commonwealth War Graves** Commission

The Great War Forum www.1914-1918.invisionzone.com

The National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Oxford DNB

www.oxforddnb.com

### Original Records:

Five volumes of letters written by employees to Mr A E C Shippam during World War 1, Add Mss 1606 at West Sussex Records Office

#### Acknowledgements:

With thanks to West Sussex Records Office.