

The Short Life of Harry Francis Hall

1891 – 1918

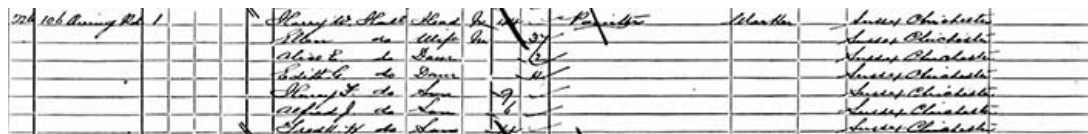


Hall Family circa 1912, Copyright Amanda Hall

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.



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

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedules... **129**
(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule must be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged ten years and upwards		BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every person	INFIRMITY
			For Males, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Females, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Infants under one year, state the age in months, and whether born in this country or elsewhere.	For Males, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Females, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Infants under one year, state the age in months, and whether born in this country or elsewhere.	For Males, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Females, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Infants under one year, state the age in months, and whether born in this country or elsewhere.	For Males, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Females, state whether single, married, widowed, or divorced. For Infants under one year, state the age in months, and whether born in this country or elsewhere.			
Harry William Hall	Head	34	Married	23	9	2	House Painter	240	Chichester Sussex British
Ellen Hall	Wife	47	Married	23	9	2	Laundry Maid	330	West Dean
Edith Gertrude Hall	Daughter	21	Single				Factory	919	Portfield
Harry Francis Hall	Son	19	Single				Potted Meats	919	Portfield
Alfred John Hall	Son	16	Single				Labour Assistant	925	Portfield
Frederick William Hall	Son	14	Single				Factory	919	Portfield
Edward Reginald Hall	Son	8	Single				School		Portfield
Bessie Charles Hall	Son	12	Single				School		Portfield

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

(To be filled up by the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: **Harry William Hall**
 Postal Address: **6 St James Rd Chichester**

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

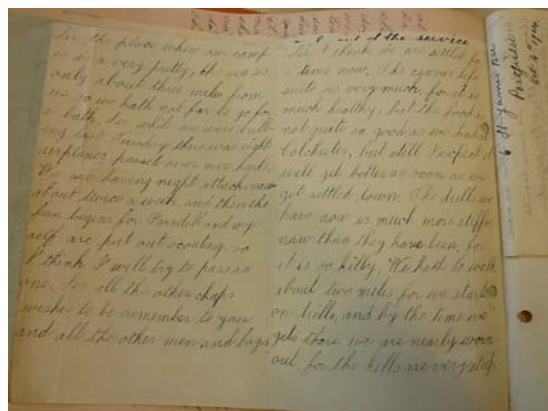
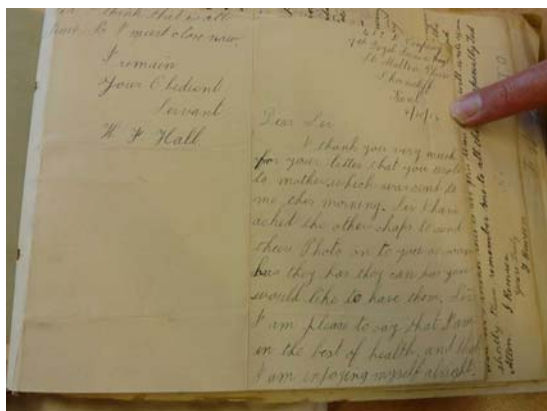
Top line (left to right): Alice Eveline Hall, Harry Francis Hall, Edith Gertrude Hall, Alfred John Hall

Bottom line (left to right): Frederick William Hall, Harry William Hall, Achibald Hall, Ellen 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 4th 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.

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

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

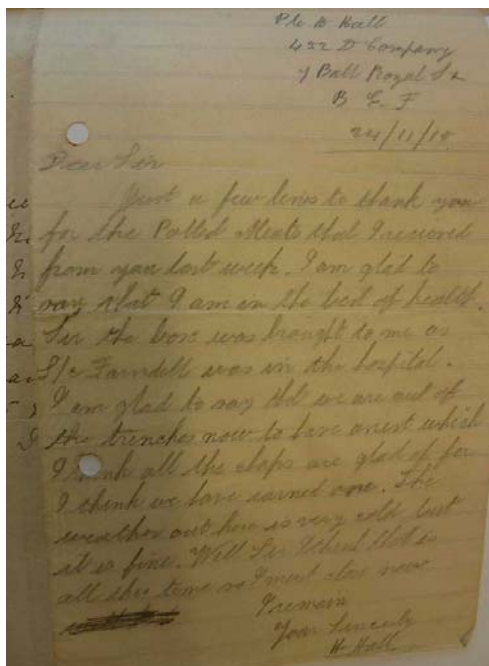
Dear Sir

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

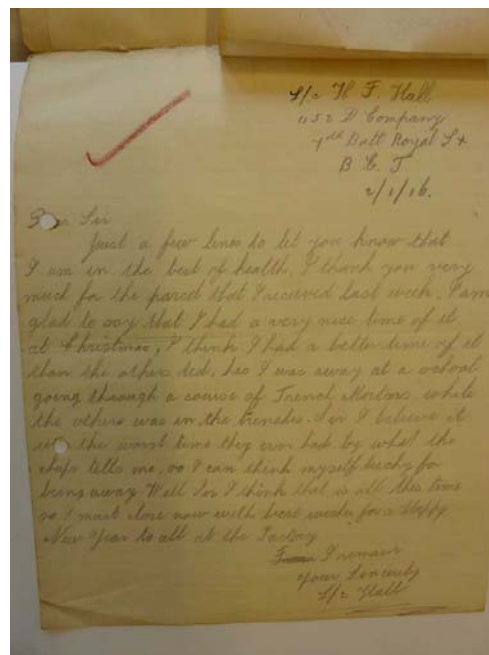


Add Mss 1606 West Sussex Records Office

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

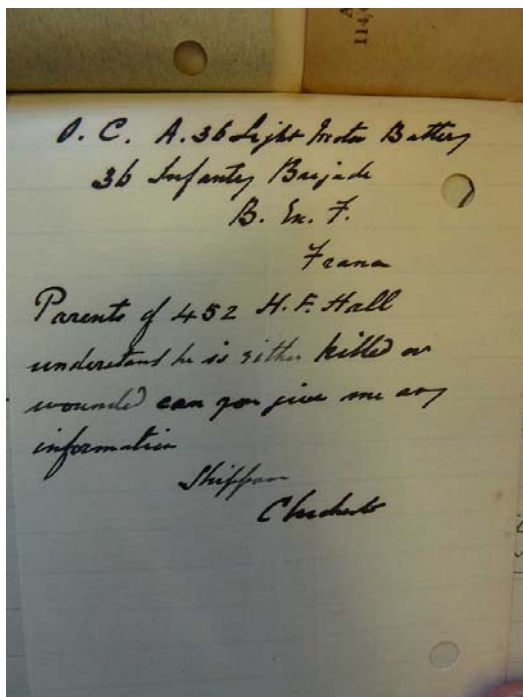
Lance Corporal H F Hall
452 D Company
7th Batt Royal Sx BEF
2 January 1916

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.



Add Mss 1606 West Sussex Records Office

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

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

Shippam
 Chichester

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 1st Australian General Hospital in

NEW METHOD OF MAIL POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS (United Kingdom)		No. of Telegram For Telegram Day, month and year Month of day
Give address and figure instructions.	Words Sent	If longer than 100 characters in this Telegram mark the excess on the back of the card
Charge Per	No. By	
TO: M. A. Hall India, Calcutta, Suva		
12 Messages in this card 9 Words each	25 515 0000 0000 204 30 F 2000 17 Road house 200 May 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 FROM: 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 The Name and Address of the Person to be written in the Space provided at the Back of the Form. 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000	

9

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 Rumboldswyke 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

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

The date on Harry's grave in St Sever Cemetery Rouen, France, is 22 May 1918 although his actual date of death is 24 May 1918.

Harry is also recorded on his paternal Grandmother's gravestone in Portfield Cemetery, Chichester which states the correct date of death as 24 May 1918.



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

Mrs Amanda Hall

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 (Mrs)
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

Newspapers

Chichester Observer and West Sussex Reporter, West Sussex Records Office

Websites

Ancestry www.ancestry.co.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org

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.