

CAPTAIN JAMES NORMAN HALL

Colfax, Iowa

The fortunes of war are so diversified and so uncertain that it is indeed difficult to expect or foresee what the future has in store for one soldier over another.

To at least one Jasper County man the gods of fate both smiled and frowned and provided a life of adventure and history making experience that seldom falls to the lot of any one individual. Captain James Norman Hall of Colfax, Iowa, in point of service, stands forth as Jasper County's premier soldier in the late world war. To Captain Hall was afforded the unique experience of serving under the colors of three of the great allied nations in the war against German autocracy—England, France, and when his own country entered the war, he immediately transferred his endeavors under the Stars and Stripes.

In civil life Captain Hall was a newspaper correspondent and contributed many articles to several well known American magazines. The Captain was sojourning in England at the time Germany, under the leadership of her former kaiser and emperor, Wilhelm II, undertook the conquest of the world. When Great Britain called her sons to the colors, Mr. Hall, though an American citizen, immediately "joined up," and on August 18, 1914, enlisted as a private at the Horseguards Parade, London, in the Ninth Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. He trained for a period of nine months in various camps in England, and was ordered into active service in France on May 30, 1915.

Mr. Hall served with the British Expeditionary Forces in France as a lance corporal, in charge of a machine gun section, from May 30, 1915, until November 24, 1915, on which date he was given an honorable discharge from the British army. Mr. Hall was given his discharge ostensibly because of being an American citizen, but actually because of the serious illness of his father, Mr. A. W. Hall, at Colfax, Iowa.

Mr. Hall returned to the United States in December, 1915, and remained at his home in Colfax until his father's health had improved sufficiently to allow him to return to England, which he did in July, 1916, expecting to reenlist in the British army. Mr. Hall found, however, that it was possible to enlist in France in the Lafayette Flying Corps as an aviator in the French service. On October 13, 1916, he enlisted in the Lafayette Flying Corps, and after six months of training, was sent to the front as a pilot in the Lafayette Escadrille, a squadron of American volunteer airmen, attached to a French Combat Group.

Captain Hall was wounded in an aerial combat on June 26, 1917, and spent the following two and one-half months in a hospital. Following recovery from his wounds, Captain Hall returned to the front in September, 1917. Upon returning to the front the second time he served with the French from September, 1917, until February 7, 1918, upon which date Mr. Hall accepted his commission as captain in the United States Air Service. He remained with the Lafayette squadron, which became the 103rd American Pursuit Squadron on February 18, 1918, until March 29, 1918, at which time Captain Hall was sent as flight commander to the 94th Pursuit Squadron, U. S. A.

Captain Hall served with the 94th Squadron until May 7, 1918, upon which date he was shot down behind the German lines, at Pagny-sur-Moselle, France, breaking both ankles and his nose in the fall. He remained a prisoner in Germany from that date until the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918, and shortly afterward was released.

Captain Hall was honorably discharged from the service on March 10, 1919, after approximately four years of military service.

It was during Captain Hall's service in the British army that he wrote his famous book, "Kitchener's Mob," one of the most widely read books dealing with the war ever published.