

Durham Donald George Hall

Captain DDG Hall appeared as a witness in the inquest into the death of Hebert Anderson who died on Christmas Eve 1917 crashing his machine into the golf course on Beverley Westwood. The report of the inquest indicated that Captain Hall was the controller of Anderson's training flight. At the time, Captain Hall was en route with 80th squadron from Montrose to France; they were in Beverley from 1st November 1917 to 27th January 1918. It's possible that Lieutenant Anderson was training to join 80th Squadron. Captain Hall was one of two Flight Commanders of 80th Squadron and was probably second in command of the squadron while it was at Beverley.

Captain Hall was himself killed in France while flying. His CWGC entry records:

Name:	HALL, DURHAM DONALD GEORGE
Initials:	D D G
Nationality:	United Kingdom
Rank:	Captain
Regiment/Service:	Royal Flying Corps
Unit Text:	80th Sqdn.
Age:	20
Date of Death:	27/03/1918
Awards:	M C
Additional information:	Son of Mrs. Ethel Hall (now Gaskell), of White House, Broadfield Rd., Folkestone, Kent.
Casualty Type:	Commonwealth War Dead
Grave/Memorial Reference:	III. A. 9.
Cemetery:	<u>DOULLENS COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION No.1</u>

Captain Hall's death was reported thus in Flight magazine on April 11th 1918.

Captain D. D. G. HALL, M.C., Yorkshire Regiment, who died of wounds received while flying on March 26th, was son of Mrs. Upton Gaskell, and was twenty-three years of age. He obtained his commission in May, 1915, and was appointed temporary captain in July, 1917, when he received the rank of Flight Commander in the Air Service. He had served with distinction, and had been awarded the Military Cross.

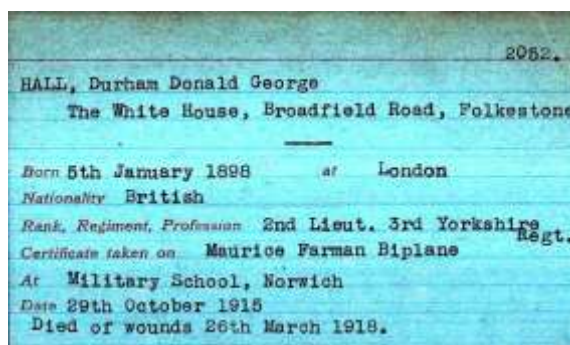
An entry in <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=11674> provides more detail. In response to a query about a Lieut. Durham Donald George Hall MC, the following reply was received

“Captain D D G Hall MC was flying Sopwith F.1 Camel B9179 of No 80 Sqn RFC when he failed to return from an 11.35 patrol on 26 March 1918. His aircraft was seen

to land near Albert and a cyclist was sent over to locate the pilot, but the search was not successful. Capt Hall died of wounds soon after - 'The Sky Their Battlefield' has 27 March as the date of his death, while 'The Camel File' has 31 March (and as a Prisoner of War).”



Durham Hall was taught to fly as part of the GB Aero scheme at the Military School in Norwich. He qualified on 29th October 1915. He was at the time a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment. The photograph would have been taken on the date of his completion of the training programme. The certificate reports that Durham Hall was born on 5th January 1898.



His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to confer the Military Cross on the under-mentioned officers and warrant officers in recognition of their gallantry and devotion to duty in the field:—

2nd Lt. (Temp. Lt.) D. D. G. HALL, York. R. and R.F.C.

For conspicuous gallantry in action. He has flown in the worst of weather and often at very low altitudes. On one occasion he flew very low under a heavy fire from the ground, in order to range our artillery.

Flight magazine of December 14 1916 reports the award of the Military Cross to Lieutenant Hall. The award was in the London Gazette of 11th December.

Captain Hall was a member of 80 squadron. No 80 Squadron RFC was formed at Thetford on 1 August 1917 from a nucleus of 36 RS (or TS) and moved to Montrose on 10 August 1917. The Squadron moved south again to Beverley on 17 November 1917. The squadron was equipped with Sopwith Camel F1 fighters. It was at this time, on Christmas Eve 1917, that Herbert Anderson died in an accident under the supervision of Captain Hall.

80 Squadron took off from Beverley on 25 January 1918 for France via Hitchin and thence to St Omer and from there via Serny to Boisdingham where they arrived on 29 January. For the first 10 days the squadron was grounded by cold weather and fog. 80th squadron was deployed to attack advancing German forces. General Salmond's order indicates the fearsome nature of their task. The day after it was issued, Captain Hall was grounded and died.

Maj. Gen. Salmond, Commanding the RFC in France, issued an operational order at 11.05 am on 25 March to OC Ninth Wing:

" I wish you as soon as you can after receipt of this to send out your scout squadrons and those of No 27, No 25 and No 62 Squadrons that are available on the line Grévillers-Martinpuich-Maricourt. These squadrons will bomb and shoot up everything they can see on the enemy side of this line. Very low flying is essential. All risks to be taken. Urgent."

Quoted from *The War in the Air*, by H A Jones

In the 1901 census, aged 3, Durham was staying at the South Shore Hydro in Blackpool, with his mother Ethel B Hall aged 25 who is described as married and an actress. Durham's place of birth is given as Middlesex, London; Ethel's is Toungoo, Burmah. Two other actors were also staying at the hotel, John F McArdle (b. 1870 in Philadelphia USA - ?? subject) and Geoffrey P Huntley (b. 1868 in Ireland) and they appear immediately before Ethel on the census page. George P Huntley was a stage actor who was born in 1868 and died in 1927. In December 1900 he had appeared as Widow Twankey in Aladdin at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester and there are references to other pantomimes and musical comedies in which he participated, sometimes with J F McArdle. Huntley became famous in the USA and the New York Times reported his death in 1927 with the headline:

GEORGE P. HUNTLEY, IRISH ACTOR, DIES;
Comedian, Almost as Well Known Here as
Abroad, Succumbs in London at 59. MADE HIS
DEBUT AT SIX First Came to America With the
Kendalls in 1891 -- Benefit Arranged Before His
Death to Be Held



George was the son of an actress Josephine Huntley.

Immediately after Durham, the 1901 census has the details of Alice Moore a 19 year old maid servant from Woolwich, Kent. It is possible that she was retained to look after Ethel and her young son.

One would imagine then that Ethel Hall was probably a singer who complemented the comic routines of Huntley and McArdle.

The South Shore Hydro is not in operation now. It was though next door to the Brighton Hydro which still exists as the Colonial Hotel at 465 South Promenade.

In 1891, Ethel is recorded as a visitor at the household of Lucy Wardell at 97 Grove Lane, Eastside, Camberwell, London. She is aged 16 and is a scholar.

Ethel Hall is also recorded in the 1881 census where she is living with her mother, Louisa Lloyd, and a number of brothers and sisters at 82 Richmond Rd, Paddington. She is the youngest child at the age of six. It is not clear what the marital status is of her mother (widower?) nor where she was born (at sea?). All the children were born in Burma between 1862 and 1875. Ethel's father was Lt. Col. Arthur Malcolm Lloyd, Indian Staff Corps. and Deputy Commissioner of Tonghoo, Upper Burmah. He was also a keen bird-watcher.

There is a record of the marriage of Ethel Beatrice Lloyd and Sydney Donald Edward Hall in 1893. He was presumably Durham's father. The couple divorced in 1902 on the wife's petition.

Durham went to Charterhouse School, one of the premier public schools in England. In 1911 he was a pupil at a preparatory school, St Michaels in Westgate on Sea. Charterhouse School's war memorial records an entry for him. The [p] against his name indicates he was a member of the Pageites school house.

Ethel Beatrice Hall subsequently married John Upton Gaskell in 1912 in the Southwark part of London. However, they divorced in 1923 again on Ethel's petition.

On 4th October 1924, Ethel Gaskell (nee Lloyd) married for the third time, this time to Alastair Ian Matheson, son of Lt. Col. Duncan Matheson of Achany.