

Man Killed In Running Gun Battle With Police

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. —(SNS)

Said to have opened fire first and wounded a police officer, Knox Fall, age about 32, was killed on the streets of downtown Birmingham late Tuesday in a running gun battle with three police officers who were reported joined by a white soldier, on request of the wounded officer, and by a bus operator. The condition of the officer was reported "good" although he was described as "seriously" wounded.

Police Officer J. E. McDonlad is said to have attempted to arrest Fall on the corner of 20th Street and Second Ave., No., about 4:45 p. m. on complaint of a white woman that Fall had entered a white woman's rest room in a nearby building, with Fall opening fire.

Assistant Police Chief Cousins said that Fall fired two shots at Officer McDonald with one bullet taking effect. Mr. Cousins' account adds that the wounded officer handed his gun to Pfc. Peter Paul Szentlar, Jr., of the Birmingham Army Air Base, who was by-standing near the scene with the soldier shooting once at Fall, probably hitting him in the thigh.

Soon Police Officer J. A. Hale is reported to have reached the scene, fired several shots at the fleeing Fall, and hitting the slain man in the back. Fall is said to have run east on Second Avenue with Officer Hale and Pfc. Szentlar, Jr., chasing him. Mr. Cousins indicated that while Fall was running, he was re-loading his .32 calibre pistol.

Fall is reported to have turned as he reached Second Ave., and 21st St., took a crack at Police Officer H. P. Williams who was rushing to the scene, the bullet grazing the coat of the officer. Williams is said to have fired two shots which wounded the victim.

Unidentified at the time, an ambulance from the Southside Branch

of Shortridge Funeral Home rushed the mortally wounded man to Hillman Hospital where he died shortly after arrival.

One version of the shooting affray said that when the officer came to arrest Fall, that Fall whipped a pistol from his coat and began firing without warning. Hundreds of shoppers were reported on the streets at the time with the shooters able to direct their fire without injury to bystanders.

Omer Bently, an armed city bus driver, said according to reports that he was taking on passengers on his bus at Second Ave., and 22nd St., when he heard the shots. He said that Fall saw him pull his

gun and began to fire at him. And that he fired back.

Coroner Gip Evans said 66 rounds of .32 calibre ammunition and \$91 was found upon Fall's body. Detectives N. C. Propst and W. E. DeGroat of the homicide squad were able to identify the victim by use of fingerprints.

The victim whose 1941 address was listed as 323 58th St., No. had a crime record which showed he was arrested in 1942 on two charges of an assault with a weapon and fined \$200 and given a prison term, according to police records.

Funeral arrangements had not been made late Wednesday.