FAMOUS Spies

AN ESPIONAGE SERIES

NATHAN HALE 1755-1776

Nathan Hale is widely considered America's first spy. Hale was a soldier for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War who volunteered for an intelligence-gathering mission but was captured and killed by the British.

He is widely attributed to have said, before his hanging, "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

On September 12, 1776, Hale was ferried behind enemy lines, an act immediately punishable by death. Accounts differ as to how he was exposed, but on the morning of September 22, Hale was hung for the crime of espionage at what is now 66th Street and Third Avenue in New York City. He was 21 years old.

Speculations arose as to whether the quote attributed to him was actually uttered, as there was no official record kept of the execution.

In 1985, Hale was designated the state hero of Connecticut. A statue of him stands outside CIA headquarters, as well as other locations across America.

AN AMERICAN HERO