# Jalmer C. Knudson

Jalmer Cornelius Knudson was born 16 September 1894 in Wilmot, Roberts County, South Dakota to Knudt Knudson and Esther Hegna, both born in Norway. Jalmer was baptized as Hjalmar Kornelius Knudsen that same month in Wilmot Lutheran Church.

Prior to the War, Jalmer worked as a locomotive fireman for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, based in Farmington, Dakota County, Minnesota. Jalmer registered for the draft in Walworth, South Dakota on 4 June 1917 when he was 22 years old; he stated that he was a resident of Farmington.

Jalmer enlisted in the Navy on 14 December 1917 as a Fireman 2nd Class and reported to the Naval Training Station at Norfolk, Virginia, where he trained from December until February aboard the *USS Kentucky* until he was shipped overseas. Jalmer wrote in May 1918:

> "… My ship was in drydock there (in Boston) for three weeks and we had a good chance to look the historic city over. We were there the day of the Third Liberty Loan and it sure was an enthusiastic city… I have been transferred from the *Kentucky* and am aboard the U.S. transport, *Leviathan*, the old German liner, "*Vaterland*." It's no use for me to try to describe this ship as it is hard for me to realize her size even while aboard her. She carried a crew of 1,900 sailors and her last trip across she took 18,000 troops. She has eight decks above the waterline and draws 46 feet of water.
> She is 954 feet in length…"

Jalmer served aboard the battleship USS *New York,* the flagship of U.S. Battle Ship Division 9, sent to reinforce the British Grand Fleet 6th Battle Squadron in the North Sea for blockade and escort duty. On 14 October 1918, they accidentally hit a German U-boat, taking out two propeller blades and one engine. It was the only ship in Division 9 to sink a vessel while with the Grand Fleet 6th Battle

Squadron. The ship was repaired at Rosyth on 18 October and was on hand when the German High Seas fleet surrendered following the signing of the Armistice on 11 November 1918. Jalmer was mustered out of service on 29 July 1919 as Fireman 1st Class.

After the War, Jalmer lived in Ortonville, Big Stone County, Minnesota with his wife, Kathlyn Junkin (1901-1991) and he worked as a railroad fireman. In 1930, they lived at 1715 E. 37th Street in Minneapolis, and in the 1940 census they were still in that city. They had three children: Muriel, Robert and Edward. When Jalmer registered for the WWII draft in 1942, they were living in Mound, Minnesota. In May 1964, Jalmer was honored at a dinner for his 50 years of engine service and membership in the BLF&E (Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen). He and his wife took a trip to Europe in 1972 after he retired.

Jalmer Knudson died 21 November 1983 in Carver County, Minnesota at age 89. He was laid to rest in Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.