



June 12, 1999

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Medal of Honor Committee
C/O Gregg S. Clemmer, Chairman
14513 Brookmead Drive
Germantown, Maryland 20874

Dear Compatriot Clemmer;

Greetings to the SCV Medal of Honor Committee from the Kennesaw Battlefield Camp, Camp No. 700 of Marietta, Georgia. It is my honor to submit the enclosed application for consideration of the Committee for consideration of a Medal of Honor award to Sergeant Isaac Peter Collier of the 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry.

Sgt. Collier was actually submitted for consideration once before back in 1996. However, as your letter of 17 July 1996 stated it was "recommended you resubmit the nomination sometime"...later. This original nomination was made by a member of the Stone Mountain Camp, a Mr. Chris Davis. Davis and I had worked on a project before concerning the Confederate Cemetery here in Marietta when we first discussed Sgt. Collier and Davis' effort to have this most deserving Confederate soldier awarded the highest honor the Sons of Confederate Veterans can bestow.

At that time a tie vote and one member abstaining produced this unusual circumstance. Since Sgt. Collier's actions described herein did in fact occur here in Marietta at what is now lands of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, we felt it appropriate that the members of the Kennesaw Battlefield Camp resubmit the application.

None of us have any connection with Sgt. Collier in any way. We do, however, feel that his unselfish act of heroism deserves the highest recognition we as an organization can bestow.

Sgt. Collier surely saved the lives of several of his unit as well as that of his own. He had no way of knowing if the fuse would be extinguished if he hurled the live shell over the crest of their trench. A parallel can be drawn today in modern warfare. For example during the Pacific Theater of World War II, "Twenty-six marines in the Pacific received the Medal of Honor for jumping on grenades to protect their comrades." Two of these men survived. (Above and Beyond A History of the Medal of Honor from the Civil War to Vietnam, page 235). I understand we as an organization wish our presentation to represent the highest deeds of bravery possible. I feel that in another time and place these twenty-six Marines would be proud to have Sgt. Collier receive such an honor. In combat men do not have time to weigh the pros and cons of such action...it just happens, it comes from down deep within the individual, some men may have such a trait while others do not.

As a Camp we understand our cost and obligation to find a fitting place for permanent display should Sgt. Collier be awarded this high honor. Plans are already underway for such. It is our hope that the Medal of Honor Committee will vote in favor of our application.

Beau Regards,
Larry O. Blair

Larry O. Blair,
1st. Lt. Commander and Camp Historian

192 Sequoia Dr., N.E. Marietta, Georgia 30060-7214 770/422-2174

APPLICATION

CONFEDERATE MEDAL OF HONOR

Name of Nominee: Issac Peter Collier Rank: Third Sergeant

Birthplace: Upson County, Georgia Date of Birth: July 7, 1831

Branch of Service: Infantry (artillery, cavalry, infantry, marines, navy, etc.)

Specific Unit of Service

Company K Regiment 5th. Ga. Regt. Brigade Jackson
Division Walker Corps Hardee Army Army Of Tennessee
Other _____

Date Service Began: May 11, 1861 Place Service Began: Macon, Georgia

Date Service Terminated: April 26, 1865 Place Service Terminated: Greensboro, N.C.
How terminated (killed, paroled, discharged, etc.) Paroled

Date of Death: sometimes after 1887

Place of Burial (cemetery, city and state): The Collier Family Cemetery, Upson Co., Ga.

CITE DISTINGUISHING DEED OR ACTION OF NOMINEE, above and beyond the call of duty, describing relevant particulars such as whether the nominee's deed or action placed his health or life in danger, and stating whether the deed or action was unselfishly performed without thought of gain, and whether the nominee succeeded in accomplishing his mission. (please use additional blank pages as needed)

Please see the enclosed nomination and Exhibits A thru C.

IMPORTANT! Attach copies of records verifying service as well as copies of any published materials, etc., substantiating the deed of the nominee.

Nomination of Isaac Peter Collier, Confederate Medal of Honor: Commentary on Supporting Documentation

Background and Official Testimony

In siege operations around Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, the 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry occupied trenches assigned to Major General William H. T. Walker's Division south of Burnt Hickory Road.¹ On June 21, 1864, during incessant cannonading and sniping, an armed 12-pound explosive shell flew between the trench and head logs. Grazing the underside of the log, the projectile fell among the men instead of passing straight through. Sergeant Isaac Peter Collier of Company K picked up the explosive, its fuse still burning, and threw it out of the trench, saving himself and the men around him.

His brigade commander, Brigadier General John King Jackson (1828–1866), reported the incident in a general order officially recognizing Collier's deed as an "act of distinguished valor," saying:

On the 21st instant, while this brigade was in line of battle behind breastworks, and under a heavy fire from the enemy's artillery, a shrapnel shot with a Roman fuse struck the works, passed under the top log, and fell among the men in the ditch.

While the fuse was still smoking, and the men were flying from the danger of the apprehended explosion, Sergeant Isaac P. Collier, of Company K, Fifth Regiment Georgia Volunteers, seized the projectile and threw it out of the ditch.

In the judgment of the brigade commander, this is a case which calls for the exercise of the power of appointment for "acts of distinguished valor," which is vested in the President....²

As a highly experienced combat commander, General Jackson was used to judging degrees of danger and the quality of valor. He led troops in 1862 at Shiloh and during the Kentucky invasion. His brigade was virtually destroyed at Murfreesboro in January 1863, then rebuilt in time to lose 60% of its number at Chickamauga eight months later. In May and June 1864, his command had already lost more men than any other brigade in General William Hardee's Corps.³

Sergeant Collier was as modest as he was heroic. He refused advancement in a response of June 24, 1864, saying, "In throwing the shell from the ditch, I am conscious of having done nothing but my duty in attempting to save my life and the lives of the men around me."⁴ General Jackson honored the sergeant's request to remain with his comrades of Company K.

¹ *Illustrated Atlas of the Civil War*, Time-Life Echoes of Glory series, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, 1991, pages 250 and 257.

² J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp, or Religion in the Confederate Army*, The Martin & Hoyt Company, 1904. Reprint Sprinkle Publications, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1986, page 613. Full statement attached as Exhibit A.

³ Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1989, pages 151-152; Paul Ellingson, *Confederate Flags in the Georgia State Capitol Collection*, Georgia Office of Secretary of State, Atlanta, 1994, page 6; Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Volume III, Thomas Yoseloff, Inc., New York, 1956, pages 612 and 673-674; United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I. Vol. 38. Part III, Serial No. 74, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1880-1901, page 686.

⁴ Jones, *Christ in the Camp*, page 614.

Corroborating Eyewitness Testimony

John H. Harp, veteran of Company E, 5th Georgia,⁵ a post-war Commander of the Florida Division, United Confederate Veterans, and one of the men Collier saved, wrote an eyewitness account:

In the last days of May, or the first of June, 1864, while we were in the trenches to the left of Kencsaw [*sic*] Mountain, Ga., there was continuous heavy artillery firing on our lines, making it necessary for us to stay in the trenches, though the frequent heavy rains had made the trenches damp and muddy. One day a time-fused 12-pound shell struck our earthworks below the headlog, and its velocity was so impeded that it fell in the trench right among the men at that point, the fuse burning and spluttering, just ready to explode. Of course, we sprang out of that trench at once, but while the fuse was still burning and spluttering, Sergt. I. P. (Pete) Collier, of Company K, 5th Georgia Regiment, jerked up that shell in his hands and tossed it out of the trench. It fell into a puddle of water and the fuse was put out, so the shell did not explode. I think that was a cool, brave act, and for it Pete Collier was offered a commission as lieutenant in Company E, but he would not leave his old Company K, the Upton [*sic*] Guards....⁶

This testimony was written years after the fact. The essential details are identical to those given in the official account recorded within days of the event:

- an active, fused shell flew below the headlog into the trench
- with the shell in immediate danger of exploding, Sergeant Collier picked it up and threw it from the trench
- Collier refused a field promotion offered as a reward for this act

General Jackson's official order names seven witnesses who testified to Sergeant Collier's action:

- Lieutenant Andrew H. Hightower, Company K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry
- Corporal Enoch V. Burkett, Company K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry, later captured at Savannah and held prisoner until June 16, 1865
- Private J. T. Backus, Company K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry, who survived to surrender at Bennett's Farm, NC, April 26, 1865
- Private E. P. Simpson, Company K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry
- Private W. D. K. Talley, Company K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry⁷
- Private John Allbright, Beauregard's Battery⁸
- Private J. A. Shettleworth, Beauregard's Battery

⁵ Lillian Henderson, *Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia 1861-1865*, Volume 1, Longino & Porter, Inc., Hapeville, Georgia, 1964, page 685.

⁶ "The Bravest Deed I Ever Saw," J. H. Harp, *Confederate Veteran*, Volume XXXII, February 1924, pages 45-46. Full statement attached as Exhibit B.

⁷ Henderson, *Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia 1861-1865*, Volume 1, pages 725-731; Compiled Service Records, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry, Georgia Department of Archives and History, microfilms 255-16 and 255-17.

⁸ "Beauregard's Battery" was commanded by Lieutenant René T. Beauregard, son of General P. G. T. Beauregard. The unit was also known as Ferguson's South Carolina Battery (*Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, I, 38, III, page 643).

Postwar Recognition of Collier's Singular Valor

William L. Sheppard, Artist

After the war, Collier's act of gallantry was immortalized in an engraving by premier Southern artist William Ludwell Sheppard (1833–1912). Sheppard, a veteran of the Richmond Howitzers and Confederate Army topographical engineer, became famous after the war for his illustrations for the *Battles and Leaders* history series, Carlton McCarthy's *Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life in the Army of Northern Virginia*, and J. William Jones's *The Davis Memorial Volume*. Additionally, he "was widely known as an illustrator reflecting southern [*sic*] life, its people, and the nature of the war." He contributed regularly for over 20 years to nationally established newspapers such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*. Besides his celebrated drawing talent, Sheppard was also acclaimed as a leading sculptor, who designed Richmond's Confederate Soldiers and Sailor's Monument, Richmond Howitzers Monument, and A. P. Hill Monument.⁹

An artist of Sheppard's popularity and standing was selective of the subjects upon which he invested his much sought-after talents. As an artist and combat veteran familiar with the dangers of live artillery shells, Sheppard endorsed Sergeant Collier's action as among the more memorable instances of selfless valor in the war.

Joseph T. Derry, Scholar

Professor Joseph Tyrone Derry (1841–1926) was a veteran of the 1st Georgia Infantry and 12th Georgia Artillery, as well as a prisoner of war at Camp Douglas. After the war, Professor Derry became a noted scholar, authoring seven history books, including the Georgia volume of General Clement Anselm Evans's *Confederate Military History*.¹⁰

Sheppard's engraving was used in Derry's 1895 history, *Story of the Southern States*.

General Evans (1833–1911), a divisional commander of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox and Commander-in-Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, reviewed the content of *Story of the Southern States*. He judged that its content would inspire readers "with proper pride in their Southern land; with reverence for their gallant ancestors."¹¹ Sergeant Collier's action of June 21, 1864, as part of what is documented in Derry's book, well illustrates General Evans's assessment of the text.

⁹ Marena R. Grant, *William Ludwell Sheppard: A Retrospective Exhibition of His Works, December, 1869*. The Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia, 1969; Marena R. Grant, "William Ludwell Sheppard: Artist-Illustrator," Master's thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1970, pages 3-4; Lee A. Wallace, Jr., *The Richmond Howitzers*, H. E. Howard, Inc., Lynchburg, 1993, page 146.

¹⁰ Joseph T. Derry, *Story of the Confederate States*, B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, Richmond, 1895, reprint 1979, Arno Press, Inc., page 113 (copy enclosed as Exhibit C); Kenneth Coleman and Charles Stephens Gurr, *Dictionary of Georgia Biography*, volume 1, University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1983, page 253.

¹¹ Warner, *Generals in Gray*, page 83; Derry, *Story of the Confederate States*, "Introduction."

J. William Jones, Clergyman

The Reverend John William Jones (1836–1909) was a veteran of the 13th Virginia Infantry, missionary chaplain to the III Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, secretary of the Southern Historical Society, editor of the *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Chaplain General of the United Confederate Veterans, and author of *Personal Reminiscences of General Robert E. Lee*.¹²

The Reverend Mr. Jones used Sheppard's engraving in his 1904 book, *Christ in the Camp*, a spiritual history of the Southern soldier. The picture accompanies the texts of General Jackson's order and Sergeant Collier's reply.¹³

The theme of *Christ in the Camp* is the growth in Christian maturity of the Confederate soldier as evidenced by singular actions of the highest character. In selecting material for his work, Jones chose only examples supporting the virtues of courage, unselfish regard for others, and true humbleness of spirit. In preserving General Jackson's official order and Collier's reply as part of this work, the Reverend Mr. Jones endorsed Sergeant Collier's deed as a model of the highest valor.

¹² *Who Was Who in America*, Volume I, 1897–1942, Marquis—Who's Who Incorporated, Chicago, 1966, page 649; "The Last Roll: Chaplain General J. William Jones," *Confederate Veteran*, XVII, page 239.

¹³ Jones. *Christ in the Camp*, pages 613–614.

Summary and Justification of Nomination

Sergeant Collier's heroic action of June 21, 1864 is documented by the direct testimony of eight comrades who were eyewitnesses to the event and by an official order of his brigade commander who certified the eyewitness accounts. It is further validated as a valorous action of a singular nature by reputable and accomplished men of arts, scholarship, and religion many years after the event, themselves Confederate veterans who had seen combat and suffered the rigors of soldier life.

By virtue of the preponderance of the evidence, Sergeant Collier's action meets the criteria justifying the award of the Confederate Medal of Honor:

- It was **above and beyond the call of duty** in that running clear of a live, fused projectile is a normal action and consonant with a soldier's duty to take all reasonable means in such a situation to preserve himself. Collier's brigade commander officially proclaimed the sergeant's conduct as an act of "distinguished valor."
- Picking up a five, fused 12-pound projectile to throw clear of the site indisputably placed Collier's **health and life in danger**.
- Performing such an act when the way was clear for escape showed his conduct to be **unselfishly performed**.
- Collier's rejection of a field promotion offered as a result of his action demonstrates he **carried out this action without thought of gain**.
- It was **successful in its accomplishment** in that it saved the life of Collier and his comrades, all of whom lived to continue serving in the defense of their country.

It is with pride that I nominate for the Confederate Medal of Honor Third Sergeant Isaac Peter Collier, Company K, 5th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry.

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Bibliography for Researching The 5th Georgia Infantry

Confederate Military History, Extended Edition Vol. 7: Georgia. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot, 1987. E484C65.1987v7. See pp. 28-29 (2 photocopied pages) for a brief unit history.

Crute, Joseph H., Jr. Units of the Confederate States Army. Midlothian, VA: Derwent Books, 1987. Ref. See pp. 86-87 (1 photocopied page) for a concise summary of the regiment's service.

Georgia. State Division of Confederate Pensions and Records. Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia, 1861-1865. Vol. 1. Hapeville, GA: Longino & Porter, 1959. pp. 641-749. E559.3G4v1. Unit roster. CD-ROM available.

Jones, Charles E. Georgia in the War, 1861-1866. Atlanta, GA: Foot & Davies, 1909. E559.4J76. See p. 24 (1 photocopied page) for an incomplete list of unit officers. Reprint with additional notes and index. 1999. Eastern Digital Resources

Rigdon, John C. The Boys of the Fifth A Regimental History of the Georgia 5th Infantry Regiment. Clearwater, SC: Eastern Digital Resources, 1998. 254 p. ORDER

Sifakis, Stewart. Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Georgia. NY: Facts on File, 1995. pp. 190-92 (3 photocopied pages). E577S53.1995.

Wood, W. Kirk, ed. A Northern Daughter and a Southern Wife: The Civil War Reminiscences and Letters of Katherine H. Cumming, 1861-1865. Augusta, GA: Richmond County Hist Soc, 1976. 126 p. E487C95A3. Wife of Maj. Joseph B. Cumming.

The following manuscripts may be found in the US Military History Institute Archives. The Photo Archive also includes images of individuals of this unit.

Steed, L.G. - CWTIColl

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5th Georgia Infantry
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appointment for the "acts of distinguished valor" which is voted in the president

The witnesses of the raising of
Sergeant Collier are Lieutenant A. H
High, the Town, Corporal E. U. Burkett,

Private J. V. Dutton, Co., K. 5th Regt,
Privates John Allister & F. A. Stewart
of Beauregard's Battery - as there is a
vacancy of second lieutenant in Co., E
5th Regt. Sergeant Isaac J. Collier, is
hereby promoted to the rank of second

lieutenant in Co., E 5th Regt, to take rank
from the 21st day of June, 1864.

He will report to the commanding
officer of the Co., for duty. This order
is subject to the approval and signature
of the President.

By command of Brigadier-general
John B. Jackson
S. A. Moberg, A. A. General

E. P. Simpson
W. D. K. Tolle
J. I. Backus
Co. K, 5th At
Regiment