

Captain Samuel Hymer

115th Illinois Volunteer Infantry
Brevet Major

Medal Of Honor
For
Gallantry at
Buzzards Roost Gap, Georgia
October 13, 1864

Tullahoma Campaign

June 24-July, 1863

Battle of Chickamauga

September 19-20, 1863

Siege of Chattanooga

September 24-October 26, 1863

Battle of Resaca

May 14-15, 1864

Battle of Kenesaw Mountain

June 27, 1864

Battle of Peach Tree Creek

July 19-20, 1864

Siege of Atlanta

July 27-August 25, 1864

Action at Buzzards Roost Gap

October 12-13, 1864

Prisoner of War

Medal of Honor



*The President of the United States
in the name of
The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor*

to

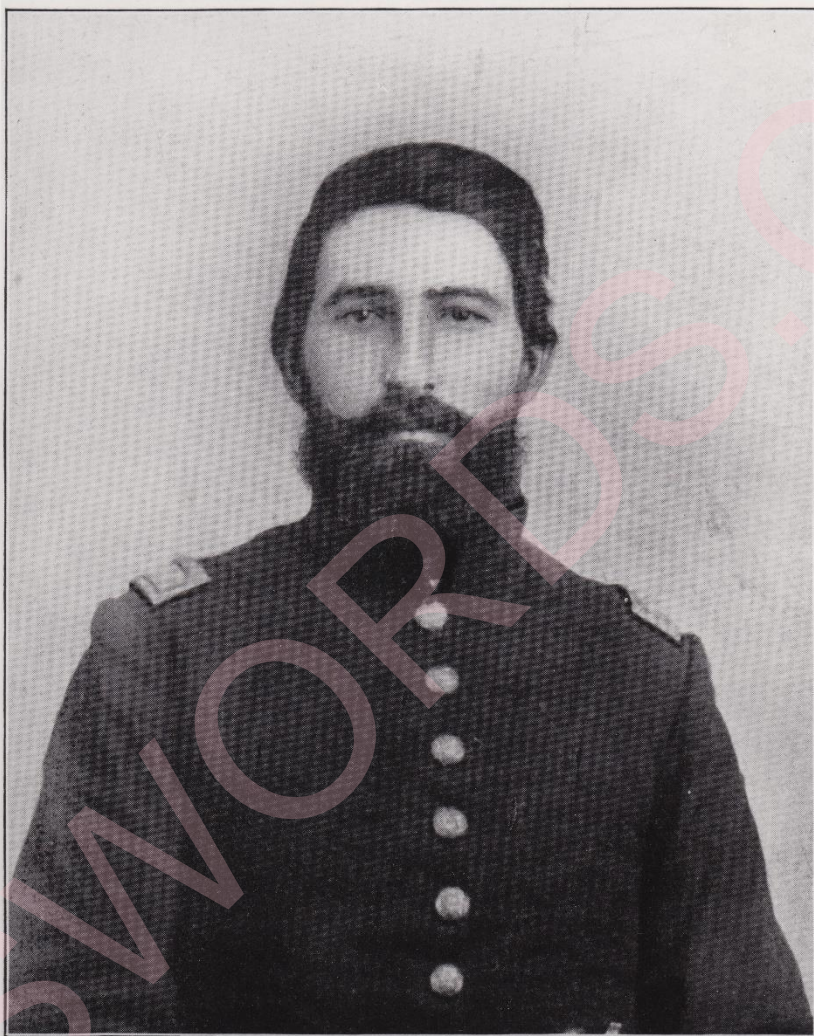
HYMER, SAMUEL

Rank and Organization: Captain, Company D, 115th Illinois Infantry. ***Place and Date:*** At Buzzard's Roost Gap, Ga., 13 October 1864. ***Entered Service At:*** Rushville, Schuyler County, Ill. ***Born:*** 17 May 1829, Harrison County, Ind. ***Date of Issue:*** 28 March 1896.

Citation:

With only 41 men under his command, defended and held a blockhouse against the attack of Hood's Division for nearly 10 hours, thus checking the advance of the enemy and insuring the safety of the balance of the regiment, as well as that of the 8th Kentucky Infantry, then stationed at Ringgold, Ga.

Citation Courtesy of www.HomeOfHeroes.com



BREVET MAJ. SAMUEL HYMER, U. S. VOLS.
CAPTAIN COMPANY D.

The GUN REPORT

Berdan
Breechloaders
Part III
by
Edward A. Hull

Volume 33, Number 2

July 1987/\$2.75



The GUN REPORT

Dedicated to the Interests of Gun Enthusiasts Everywhere

Volume 33 Number 2 July 1987

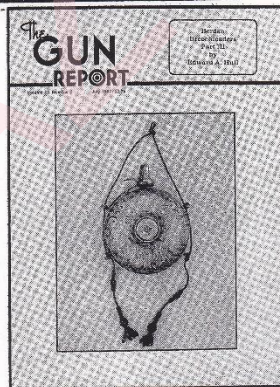
ARTICLES

- 14 Berdan Breechloaders—Part 3
By Edward A. Hull
- 26 The Winchester Musket
By Konrad F. Schreier, Jr.
- 54 Thunder at Buzzard's Roost Gap
By John G. Hamilton

REGULAR FEATURES

- 20 The Cartridge Collector
By Lou Behling
- 36 Antique Arms Prices
By Eric Vaule
- 38 Gun Show Calendar
- 44 Gun Club News
- 60 Stolen Guns
- 60 Book Reviews
By C.R. Suydam
- 62 Powder Flask
By C.R. Suydam
- 64 Classified Ads
- 66 Advertiser's Directory

ON THE COVER



*A superb south German, 16th century,
ivory hemispherical powder flask.
(Photo courtesy of Alan S. Kelley)*

Editor and Publisher

Kenneth W. Liggett

Publication Director

Kandy Liggett-Harrison

Publication Manager

Kathy Jackson

Production Manager

Nancy Bowker

Circulation Manager

Ann McCrery

Business Manager

Betty Weeks

Staff Editors

Louis Behling

R. Stephen Dorsey

Richard King

C. Meade Patterson

Charles R. Suydam

Eric Vaule

Staff Photographer

John Battaglia

Honorary Advisory Board

Norm Flayderman

Herb Glass

Jack Malloy

Advisory Board

Robert Berryman

Bernard Braverman

Fred Fiet

Herb Glass, Jr.

J. Robert Howard

Robert Mandel

Richard C. Marohn, M.D.

Bob Noske

Ray Petry

Herb Ratner

Eric Vaule

Tom Wibberley

The Gun Report is published monthly by WORLD WIDE GUN REPORT, INC., P.O. Box 111, Aledo, Illinois 61231. Copyright 1987 by World Wide Gun Report, Inc. Aledo, Illinois. Printed by The Ovid Bell Press, 1201-1205 Bluff St., Fulton, Missouri. Subscription prices: 1 year-\$27; 2 years-\$49; 3 years-\$72. Foreign subscriptions add \$7 per year. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to P.O. Box 111, 110 South College Avenue, Aledo, Illinois 61231. Phone 309-582-5311 or 582-5312. ISSN: 0017-5617.

Entered as second class matter June 13, 1955 at the post office at Aledo, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1878. Second class mailing privilege, authorized at Aledo, Illinois. Additional entry authorized at Fulton, Missouri, September 21, 1983.

Advertising Closing Date

1st Day of July for September Issue

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Two weeks notice required on all changes. Send old address, with code number, as well as new.

MANUSCRIPTS: While due care will be taken, The Gun Report is not responsible for loss, or damage to, unsolicited manuscripts or photographs. Return postage must accompany all manuscripts. Write or call for manuscript and photograph requirements.

The opinions expressed in articles published over a by-line are not necessarily the opinions of The Gun Report.

Thunder at Buzzard's Roost Gap

by John G. Hamilton



Figure 1. Colt 1851 Navy—serial number 146943.

Captain Samuel Hymer, Company D, 115th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, was stationed at Buzzard's Roost Gap, Georgia during the period July 2, 1864 through October 13, 1864. He and forty-one men in his command were charged with the responsibility of guarding a railroad bridge which spanned Mill Creek and a few miles of railroad track which stretched between the Gap and Tunnel Hill. The Gap, which was some 1600 feet wide, was strategically important to both the Union and Confederate Armies because as long as it remained in Union hands the Confederate Army was stalled in the drive, unless they chose to march many miles out of their way in search of another Gap or passage through the mountain.

The Union command, realizing the importance of Buzzard's Roost Gap, had, in August, constructed a blockhouse to be used as a fort. It was located a short distance east of the Gap in a position where it would be possible to control any movement of enemy troops on the road leading from Dalton to Tunnel Hill. Captain Hymer and his men were quartered in this structure during their stay at the Gap.

On the morning of October 12, two Union scouts arrived at the Gap and informed Captain Hymer that General Hood and the Confederate Army were approaching Resacca, fifteen miles away, and moving north in the direction

of the Gap. On the 13th, a second scout arrived and reported that the 17th Iowa Infantry had been captured at Tilton, Georgia and the garrison at Dalton had surrendered without firing a shot. At the very moment when Captain Hymer and the scout were discussing these disturbing events the Advance Guard of the Confederate Army was observed approaching on a hill a few hundred yards away. About one o'clock, Hood appeared with his army and demanded that Captain Hymer surrender, which he refused to do. He immediately informed his men of his decision to stay and explained that their objective was to delay the advance of the Confederate Army and prevent them from attacking the rear of the 115th Illinois Infantry at Tunnel Hill.

Captain Hymer knew that once the Confederates launched their all out attack on the fort there would be no let up until the badly out-numbered and out-manned Union garrison either surrendered or was annihilated. In either case, he was determined that the Confederates would pay a high price and they would not reach Tunnel Hill in time to attack the 115th Illinois Infantry. With this in mind he divided the men into two groups, whereby one group would man the portholes and direct fire upon the enemy while the other group would reload the weapons. Then at pre-determined intervals they would switch positions with a

few exceptions. He stationed himself in the doorway from which position he could observe the movements of the enemy and direct the fire of his men. His second in command, Lt. M.P. Jones, was to assist in all of these matters as required by the exigency of the situation.

Within a short time the advance guard of the enemy appeared. Captain Hymer raised his weapon and fired, and the officer in command went down. The Confederates immediately fell back to regroup and, after a short pause, a battery of six guns was run up. At approximately 1:00 p.m. they opened fire on the fort from some 100 yards away. The men in the fort returned the fire and quickly silenced the battery.

There was a short lull, and as the battery opened up in earnest, the Gap reverberated with the thunder of the Confederate heavy artillery barrage as once more they began pouring hot shot and shell upon the fort. It was not long before one of the cannonballs found the mark and passed through a porthole, killing two of the defenders. Within a few minutes, another cannonball came crashing into the fort and two more defenders were down.

The enemy further complicated matters for those in the fort by positioning sharpshooters among the rocks on the side of the mountain. They were chosen for this type of work because they were trained expert marksmen; they were

THE GUN REPORT

able to wreck havoc upon Captain Hymer and his men by shooting through the portholes with uncanny accuracy.

Captain Hymer, as time permitted, turned his attention to the snipers. A number of his shots found their mark as the bodies were seen to fall from the rocky sides of the mountain.

History tells us Captain Hymer was an excellent marksman as evidenced by the following statement made by James Thompson, Corporal, Co. D, 115th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, in a sworn affidavit attesting to the valor of Captain Hymer at the Battle of Buzzard's Roost Gap, Georgia:

During the entire time from 1:00 p.m. til 10:00 p.m., Captain Hymer directed the battle and when a man was killed he took his gun and used it with effect, he being an unerring marksman.

The pistol shown in Figure 1 is to all outward appearances an ordinary Fourth Model 1851 Navy Colt, Serial No. 146943, one of approximately 43,000 such guns produced in 1863. However, there are some things which make this pistol more interesting and desirable than most fourth models:

(1) The following inscription appears on the left barrel flat: "Capt. Samuel Hymer U.S.A." The inscription is professionally and deeply engraved in script but, like the overall condition of the gun, shows much wear and hard usage. (see Figure 2). It is most unusual to find the 1851 Navy Colt inscribed anywhere but on the backstrap or trigger guard. The reason for this is that brass surfaces are easier to work with than iron. The writer has documented more than one hundred twenty-

WANTED

USED GUNS

We're paying cash for good quality, used modern & antique handguns & long guns!

Kevin Cherry . . (919) 292-5232

Call Us For Consignments Too!

Cherry's 2703 High Point Road
Greensboro, NC 27435-0307

FIREARMS FOR SALE

1. J. Dickert rifle. Flint lock reversion. Early piece with daisy head patch box, 42 inch barrel	\$1,600.00
2. Barnett trade gun dated 1883. Original percussion. Fine, smooth piece. Not messed with	\$1,400.00
3. J & S Hawken. Fine engraved gun. Pictured in Hawken Rifles by Baird	\$6,000.00
4. J. Hawken squirrel rifle. Lock by A. Meier, St. Louis. Untouched	\$1,750.00
5. Bedford or Sommerset County rifle stocked with 44 inch J. Dickert barrel. Daisy head patch box with D T engraved on it. Oval federal eagle on cheek piece	\$850.00
6. J. Henry & Son buck and ball gun-1/2 stock. Fine shooting condition	\$400.00
7. H. V. Perry 3 barrel revolving rifle formerly in the Locke collection. See page 497 of Locke Book. Beautiful specimen	\$2,750.00
8. Cased engraved Springfield Arms Co. pistol. Fine mold and eagle flask, Riling #753	\$950.00
9. English belt pistol. Exc.	\$225.00
10. Armstrong pattern derringer. Appears to be Dimick trade gun. Marked R C under barrel	\$525.00
11. Deringer Philadel. Silver mounted. 5" barrel. 1/2 stock. Very unusual piece	\$675.00
12. Cased Billinghamst buggy pistol and shoulder stock. All accoutrements, old targets, etc. Pictured in <i>Muzzle-Loading Cap Lock Rifle</i> by Roberts	\$4,700.00
13. Billinghamst underhammer rifle Lightweight shooter	\$475.00
14. Warner? or Billinghamst? underhammer target rifle with scope. Beautiful gun	\$1,950.00
15. William Billinghamst, Rochester, NY. 7 shot pill-lock revolving rifle. As new condition. None finer	\$5,750.00

LARRY NESS

201 West Third St.
(605) 665-7432 Work
Yankton SD 57078
(605) 665-1066 Home

ANTIQUE GUN PARTS, INC.

IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR NEW 180 PAGE HIGHLY ILLUSTRATED CATALOG IS NOW AVAILABLE. SEND \$6.00* plus \$1.50 postage to receive our new catalog.

We at Antique Gun Parts, Inc. have made a commitment to supply the highest quality parts available on the market today; combined with service and know how! All the parts listed below are **MANUFACTURED BY ANTIQUE GUN PARTS, INC.**, and are **IN STOCK** for immediate delivery. Dealer inquiries welcome. *Creditable to first purchase of \$50.00 or more.



1840 Musket

USP1 6LKP4 1816 North Pistol flint hammer \$12.50

USP1 6LKP5 1816 North Pistol top jaw 4.50

USP1 6LKP6 1816 North Pistol top jaw screw 3.00

USP1 6LKP2 1816 North Pistol brass pan 12.50

USP1 6LKP3 1816 North Pistol frizzen (STEEL) 15.00

USMRMR1 1841 MISSISSIPPI brass tipped ramrod.
This ramrod like all of our rods is correct right down to the threads on the end for accessories **\$15.00**

USM42RMR1 1842 U.S. Musket ramrod 15.00

USM61LKP8 Springfield mainspring, this very high quality mainspring will fit all Springfield muskets and trapdoor rifles made from 1861 to 1889. This spring is fully warranted against breakage; if it ever breaks in NORMAL use; just return it for a free replacement. Use this spring to replace the original in your shooter, and save the valuable original \$10.00

We have a complete line of reversion parts for British Brown Bess Muskets listed in our catalog!

VISA

ANTIQUE GUN PARTS, Inc.

1118 SOUTH BRADDOCK, AVE.

PITTSBURGH, PA 15218

MASTERCARD

PHONE ORDERS ACCEPTED FOR VISA, MASTERCARD, AND C.O.D. ORDERS (412) 241-1811

five 1851 Navy Colts with the brass backstrap bearing inscriptions and of this total, only five were inscribed on the barrel flat. Perhaps it is only supposition, but the writer believes this is done to make the inscription more permanent. An authentic inscription on any firearm of the Civil War period which identifies the former owner provides an opportunity for conducting historical research of the former owner.

- (2) In the case of Captain Hymer's Colt, the inscription really made the pistol much more interesting and desirable because the former owner was awarded the Medal of Honor. It was another case of a Colt, history, and a hero.

The Confederate attack commenced at 1:00 p.m. and continued without let-up until approximately 9:00 p.m. Captain Hymer personally directed most of the battle during the entire period. Lieutenant M.P. Jones, the second in command, panicked early in the battle and deserted his post, hiding under the floor of the fort during the entire battle.

At one point during the battle, when the enemy batteries were firing simultaneously, the shot and shell came smashing into the fort with such force that the defenders could feel it rocking back and forth. Captain Hymer was talking to F. Lowe when a cannonball entered the fort, taking Lowe's head off. The concussion knocked Captain Hymer unconscious to the floor. (His injury resulted in total deafness of the left ear for life).

As soon as he recovered he was on his feet again directing the battle, and as his men would fall he would put their bodies out of sight under the floor. He

was forced to handle all of these details himself, and as the attack continued his clothes became saturated with blood.

The continual pounding of the fort by the Confederate artillery began to take its toll when, about 5:00 p.m., a shell struck and damaged a log in the corner of the foundation causing severe damage to the side of the fort. This blow so damaged and weakened the whole structure that numerous shells began to penetrate it at frequent intervals. Then the enemy began to fire three or four of their twelve pounders, at one time aiming them all at one point. The result of such heavy cannonading began to shake the structure on its foundation until the roof began to crumble and fall in several places.

The situation for the defenders in the fort was becoming untenable. The Confederate commander, being aware of their dire situation, made frequent attempts to persuade them to surrender. More than 150 direct hits struck the fort before Captain Hymer began to consider surrender as the only possible way for any of them to get out alive. Then he considered two alternatives: (1) stay and fight until the fort finally came down upon their heads, at which time most of the defenders would be dead or badly wounded; and (2) to surrender with honor and upon his terms. He reasoned the enemy did not know exactly how many defenders there were or how many of their number had been killed or wounded, or how badly the structure was damaged. They could only guess how long the garrison might be able to hold out. With these facts in mind Hymer reasoned he still had some bargaining power where the terms of any surrender

were involved. He had one consolation: no matter what happened, even with time running out, their efforts had not been in vain since he and forty-one men in his command had successfully delayed General Hood and the Confederate Army for a full ten hours, thereby insuring the safety of the 115th Illinois Volunteer Infantry at Tunnel Hill and 8th Kentucky Cavalry at Ringgold, Georgia. Their victory had not been won without a price, however. Five men had given their lives and nine or ten were wounded, one of whom would later die of his wounds. Captain Hymer decided it was not worth the loss of more human lives to continue the struggle. He would negotiate with the Confederates at the first opportunity for a just and honorable surrender.

About 9:00 p.m., a Confederate officer was seen by one of the defenders approaching the fort carrying a white flag. He notified Captain Hymer, who immediately went out to meet him. Captain Hymer asked him what his orders were and he replied that he was there to demand an immediate and unconditional surrender of the fort and the garrison. Captain Hymer's quick response was that he would never surrender without terms. The Confederate officer asked him if he did not realize that General Hood and the Confederate Army were there, whereupon Hymer replied he did not care who was there and if the terms were unconditional, there would be no surrender. The Confederate officer asked Hymer what his terms were. Hymer replied, that if he would parole his men and himself he could have the fort. The Confederate officer replied that he was not empowered to offer such terms. Hymer told the officer that he would not



Figure 2. Inscription on barrel flat.

let the Confederates strip them of their clothing and other private property and then send them off to a Southern prison to die during the coming winter. He added that they would rather fight and die here. Then he told the officer to write out the best possible terms and if they provided the protection prisoners of war should have, he would sign them.

The Confederate officer presented Captain Hymer with the following statement which dictated the terms of the surrender. Hymer, after studying them, signed the paper, as did the Confederate officer.

"In the field near Dalton, Georgia, October 13, 1864. I am commanded by Major General Bate C.S.A. to demand the surrender of this fort and garrison. Your officers and men will be treated as prisoners of war. They are to retain their private property and clothing. Your defense has been gallant and any other resistance will be an unnecessary effusion of blood."

Signed, Theo. Carter, Capt. Adj., C.S.A.

"I accept the terms believing further resistance hopeless."

Signed, Samuel Hymer, Capt. Co. D, 115th Ill. Commanding

Under the terms of the agreement, Captain Hymer and his men were permitted to pack their belongings and

leave the fort before any of the enemy were permitted to come near the fort. In the interim period, Captain Hymer was busy having his men dispose of most of their arms by putting them in a nearby creek with what food and other supplies they could not carry with them.

The next morning they were allowed time to bury the dead and Confederate doctors were permitted to enter the fort to treat the wounded. Only the severely wounded were allowed to remain and others went with Captain Hymer to a Confederate prison.

Captain Hymer was commissioned Major by Brevet for special gallantry in the defense of Buzzard's Roost Gap, Georgia. This commission was dated May 21, 1865. On March 28, 1896, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for Most Distinguished Gallantry in Action at Buzzard's Roost Gap, Georgia, October 13, 1864. See Figure 3 for a copy of the letter informing Captain Hymer of the award and that it was being forwarded to him via registered mail.

Captain Hymer visited Buzzard's Roost Gap after the war and learned that Col. Clair and Major Faulkner, two of Hood's staff officers, were wounded during the attack and that the enemy's losses were severe. Many of them were buried where they fell and in one case, nine in one grave. □

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ms. Marie Varrelman Melchiori, Vienna, Virginia C.G.R.S., for researching the Medal of Honor File of Captain Samuel Hymer.

Mr. William G. Raymont, Canton, Ohio, Photographer, for photographing the Colt pistol used to illustrate this article, Figures 1 and 2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Published by The Century Co., New York 1884.

The Photographic History of the Civil War, edited by Francis Trevelyan Miller, Published by The Review of Reviews, New York, 1911.

WANTED!

COLLECTOR QUALITY
HANDGUNS

(All types; single pieces; entire collections; all related items.) — **BROWNING HI-POWERS** a personal specialty. Top \$\$\$ paid for rare, unusual, or outstanding quality.

FOR SALE!

LATEST LIST OF APPROX. 150
PIECES. (Send \$1.00)

Wm. O. Drollinger, Inc.

PO Drawer A, Castroville, CA 95012
(408) 633-3903

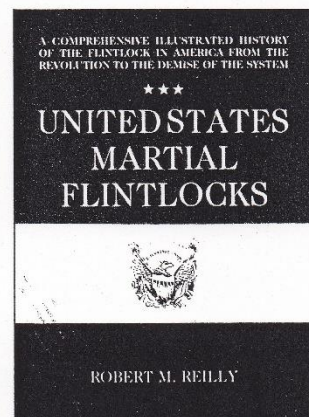
Important New Titles . . .

UNITED STATES MARTIAL FLINTLOCKS

by Robert M. Reilly

With this work, well known author/artist Robert M. Reilly completes the cycle of an illustrated history of American martial firearms beginning with the Revolutionary War and continuing through the period of the Mexican War of the mid-1840's. In supplement to the author's earlier major work, *United States Military Small Arms 1816-1865*, this book will complete an examination of every known variation of firearm from our country's beginning through the Civil War . . . totalling more than 1,500 illustrations.

Large 9" x 12" format — Hardbound with color dustjacket — 264 pages \$39.50
Include \$3.00 for shipping and handling for each book ordered. Available early August 1986



ANNOUNCING — The Man at Arms Monograph series
inexpensively priced library editions for the American arms collector

FIREPOWER FROM ABROAD

**THE CONFEDERATE ENFIELD
and THE LeMAT REVOLVER**

by Wiley Sword

A study of two weapons of great historical importance to the C.S.A. with additional data on a variety of other Confederate small arms. Available August 1986

Hardbound with dustjacket. 6 7/8" x 9 1/2" — 120 pages \$16.00
Include \$2.00 for shipping and handling for each book ordered.

THE BURNSIDE BREECH LOADING CARBINES

by Edward A. Hull

An illustrated model-by-model historical/technical examination of one of the most widely used cavalry weapons of the American Civil War based upon important and previously unpublished research. Available July 1986

Hardbound with dustjacket — 6 7/8" x 9 1/2" — 96 pages \$16.00
Include \$2.00 for shipping and handling for each book ordered.

Order from your book dealer, or directly from *Man at Arms Bookshelf*, P.O. Box 460, Lincoln, RI 02865. (401) 726-8011. Or call our TOLL FREE number 1-800-341-1522 and charge it on your VISA/MASTERCARD. Rhode Island residents add 6% sales tax.

MAN AT ARMS PUBLICATIONS, INC. · P.O. BOX 460 · LINCOLN, RHODE ISLAND 02865

Subject: Medal of honor.

No. 436,817.

Record and Pension Office,**War Department,***Washington City,*

March 28, 1896.

Major Samuel Hymer,

Late of the 115th Illinois Vols.,

Lacygne, Kansas.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform you that, by direction of the President and in accordance with the act of Congress approved March 3, 1863, providing for the presentation of medals of honor to such officers, non-commissioned officers and privates as have most distinguished themselves in action, the Assistant Secretary of War has awarded you a medal of honor for most distinguished gallantry in action at Buzzards Roost Gap, Georgia, October 13, 1864. In making the award the Assistant Secretary used the following language:

"This officer, with only forty-one men under his command, defended and held a block-house against the attack of Hood's Division for nearly ten hours, thus checking the advance of the enemy, and insuring the safety of the balance of his regiment, as well as that of the 8th Kentucky Infantry, then stationed at Ringgold, Georgia."

The medal has been forwarded to you to-day by registered mail.

Upon the receipt of it, please advise this office thereof.

Very respectfully,

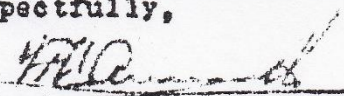

Colonel, U.S. Army,
Chief, Record and Pension Office.

Figure 3. Official notice informing Capt. Hymer of being awarded the Medal of Honor.

Captain/Brevet Major Samuel Hymer

Company D, 115th Illinois Volunteer Infantry



Submitted by [William Baran](#)

SAMUEL HYMER, Brevet Major, the second captain of Company D, was born in Harrison County, Ind., on May 17, 1829, and removed with his father's family to Schuyler County, Ill., in 1837, where he resided on a farm until he entered the service. His education was such as the district schools afforded and supplemented by brief terms in the Rushville schools. At the organization of Company D he was chosen second lieutenant very unexpectedly to himself, and on the resignation of Lieutenant Bridgewater, May 28, 1863, he was advanced to the first

lieutenancy, and on the death of Captain Huckstep, December 9, 1863, he was promoted to the captaincy of his company. As first lieutenant he commanded his company after the wounding of Captain Huckstep, and did valiant service throughout the battle of Chickamauga. During the siege of Chattanooga Captain Hymer's company occupied a position above Brown's Ferry, where it remained several weeks without tents and with not more than half a dozen blankets to the company, constantly watching the operations of the rebels on Lookout Mountain. Though always an efficient officer and faithful in every duty, the crowning glory of Major Hymer's service was the defense of the blockhouse at Buzzard Roost Gap, which has been given at length in its proper place in this history. For this splendid service, the President gave him the brevet rank of major and as further mark of distinction Congress conferred upon him a medal of honor "for most distinguished gallantry in action at Buzzard Roost Gap, Ga., October 13, 1864." In transmitting the award the secretary of war uses the following language: "This officer, with only forty-one men under his command, defended and held a blockhouse against the attack of Hood's army for nearly ten hours, thus checking the advance of the enemy and insuring the safety of the rest of his regiment, as well as that of the 8th Kentucky Infantry, then stationed at Ringgold, Georgia." Major Hymer's experience while a prisoner was much the same as other Union officers in similar circumstances. He was taken with his company after the capture to Jacksonville, Ala., then to Selma, then to Montgomery, and thence to Macon, Ga. Here five of them, including the major, escaped, but he was soon captured and returned to the stockade. The major's experience in his journeys from place to place, and the many incidents of his prison life would fill a volume, but want of space prevents giving them here. He was finally paroled and sent into our lines at Wilmington, N. C., and was thence taken to Annapolis, Md., by steamer and thence taken to his home in Schuyler County, Ill., by railroad, and was discharged May 15, 1865. In 1866 he removed to Miami County, Kan., and engaged in farming and stock raising. He soon took interest in politics, and served as township assessor, a member of the Kansas legislature,

town treasurer, and director of city schools. In 1882 he removed to La Cygne, Lynn county, Kansas, where he resides, and is an honored citizen. For many years he has been a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Source: History of 115th Reg ILL Vol. Infantry
By: Isaac Henry Clay Royse
2nd Lt. Co. E
Published 1900 Windsor & Kenfield Pub. Co. Chicago
Library # 973.7473R892
Terre Haute, IN. July 1900



Brevet Major Samuel Hymer Comments
Co. D 115th Illinois Infantry
Buzzard Roost Gap Blockhouse Battle

On the 13th of October Hood reached Dalton, capturing its colored garrison without resistance, and at once moved up the valley and demanded the surrender of Company D's blockhouse. Captain Hymer thus describes their approach and the result: "I had received orders to hold the gap and not surrender to any force. In anticipation of such an attack we had been supplied with plenty of rations and ammunition, and a large tank inside the blockhouse was constantly kept filled with fresh water. General Bate led the advance and appeared before us at 1p. m. on the 13th of October. His adjutant- general, Captain Carter, appeared on the mountainside with a flag of truce, but not recognizing its character I shot his horse from under him. Soon they brought up a battery of brass field guns and opened on the blockhouse with great fury, with both artillery and musketry. I at once placed my men, one-half at the port holes and the other half serving them with loaded guns. This soon silenced their guns, but they quickly opened again in a less exposed position. In the mean- time the rebel infantry had passed over the spurs of the mountain, and had us completely

surrounded. By three o'clock no less than 6,000 infantry and a battery were pouring shot and shell into the blockhouse. Thus the battle raged all that afternoon and evening. Now a man falls, then another, but the brave boys of Company D stand to their port holes, picking off the rebels in large numbers with their trusty rifles. As night came on the surrounding hills were lighted by the rebel camp fires. Finally the firing ceased and I looked at the result of the battle. Five of my men were dead and nearly all the rest more or less wounded. The blockhouse was torn to slivers, and the earth covering pouring in upon us. All was then still as the grave excepting the groans of the wounded. I decided to await results. We were done fighting, but we had held the entire rebel army more than ten hours, had enabled Sherman to make ten hours' gain on the enemy, and had saved our regiment at Tunnel Hill. I then placed all my men, that were still able, at the four sides of the ruined blockhouse to watch for an assault. Very soon I saw a flag shaking over the railroad grade ten steps away. To our challenge, the reply came, 'A flag of truce'. I then went out and found it was Captain Carter of General Bate's staff. He came up on the grade saying, 'I was afraid to be seen, as you have shot at everything in sight. This is the third time I have tried to come to you with a flag of truce. He then presented to me the following demand:

In the field near Dalton, Ga., October 13, 1864.

I am commanded by Major-General Bate, C.S.A., to demand the surrender of this fort and garrison. Your officers and men will be treated as prisoners of war. Your defense has been gallant, and any further resistance will be an unnecessary effusion of blood.
Theo. Carter, Captain C. S. A.

"Upon this I endorsed my acceptance as follows:
I accept the terms, believing further resistance hopeless.
Samuel Hymer, Captain Company D, 115th Ill. Infantry,
Commanding.

"I told Captain Carter his men must not enter the blockhouse until we had time to pack up and march out. We spent a half hour putting on our best clothes, packing up our valuables and throwing guns and ammunition in the creek in the rear. We then marched out in line. 'Is that all the men you have?' said the officer, to which I replied, 'No, there are five dead, and twice that number wounded still in the fort'. He exclaimed, 'Oh, we thought there were two or three companies'."

While the fight was going on at the blockhouse, eight companies of the 115th, numbering less- than 300, were listening at Tunnel Hill.

Soon after the regiment came to Tunnel Hill in July 1864, Co. D was assigned to guard a bridge at Buzzard Roost Gap, a little more than half way from Tunnel Hill to Dalton. At that time there were no fortifications in the place and the company was kept busy for some time making log breastworks for their defence. In August a company of engineers arrived and with the aid of Company D built a very substantial blockhouse. The company occupied a row of tents on the bank of the creek near the blockhouse, being ready to enter that stronghold in case of need. The company had three miles of railroad to patrol and keep open, which, with other duties, kept them very busy day and night. Frequent raids were made by Confederate cavalry and the company occasionally had slight skirmishes with them, without loss, however. On one occasion a horse was killed and its rebel rider severely wounded.

General Wheeler came in the valley some time in September with quite a force of cavalry and attacked Dalton, but the garrison, making stout defence, held them in check until the arrival of General Steedman with a force from Chattanooga. After General Hood left Atlanta on his raid on the North the country about Buzzard Roost was constantly filled with rebel scouts so that we were compelled to be always on the alert expecting an attack.

As my account of Hood's attack on our blockhouse is given in substance in the body of the history, it is not necessary to repeat it

here, but an incident is worth mentioning. Squire Bechtol of Company D was illiterate, but proved to be the smartest man in the company. When the blockhouse was captured he lay on the ground groaning and appearing to be badly wounded, and would not let anyone touch him, so he was left there with the wounded and after the rebels were gone with the prisoners, he managed to come to, having only feigned injury.

After the surrender we were taken to General Bate's headquarters, where we were asked many questions. The next morning after the capture a detail from Company D buried the dead. The wounded were taken to a house nearby and left there to make the most of their condition, while the rebel army moved on.

We were fairly well treated by our captors and recognition made of our gallant defense, being permitted to retain our side arms and most of our personal effects. The company went on a tour through the Confederacy, via Selma and Montgomery, Ala., to Millen, where Lieutenant Jones and myself were separated from the enlisted men. By special exchange fifteen of the men were sent North and the others left to take their chances in Andersonville and other prisons. Lieutenant Jones and I, with other officers were sent to Camp Sorghum, near Columbia, SC. There we met Captain Hanon and Lieutenant Gore of Company A. As Sherman approached we were taken to Charlotte, North Carolina, seventy-five men being put in each box-car. At Charlotte many prisoners made their escape, the guards not being any longer careful to prevent it. I preferred to wait a little longer and be exchanged, which occurred soon after, and Lieutenant Jones and I came to Annapolis, Md. After a visit home we were ordered to Benton's Barracks, near St. Louis, where we met the remnant of Company D, which had been exchanged at Vicksburg, and were soon after discharged.



Military Main Index

In Dulce - near Dallas
Oct 11 - 1864

Capt. Heymer
Comd'g Fort & Co. S.
Texas near ~~Dallas~~, I am ordered

by Maj Gen Wm B. R. L. to demand
The immediate and unconditional
Surrender of the Fort and Garrison
In command - Your Officers
and men will be treated as prisoners
of war and with the courtesy due them
respective ranks - They will be permitted
to retain their personal property and
clothing - Your defence has been
gallant and any further resistance
an unnecessary sacrifice of blood -

Respy
The Quarter
Capt - G. W. -

I expect the terms, believing
further resistance hopeless

Samuel Heymer
Capt. Co. I 115th Ill. Inf.
Garde

Soldier History

Samuel Hymer

[Home](#)[Personnel
Directory](#)[Generals
Directory](#)[Soldier
Report List](#)

Residence [Bainbridge IL](#);
Enlisted on 9/13/1862 at Rushville, Schuyler Co., IL as a 2nd Lieut

On 9/13/1862 he was commissioned into "D" Co. [IL 115th Infantry](#)
He was discharged on 5/15/1865

Promotions:

- * 1st Lieut 5/26/1863
- * Capt 12/9/1863

Other Information:

born 5/17/1829 in Harrison County, IN
died 5/9/1906
Buried: Rushville Cemetery, Rushville, IL

Medal of Honor Information:

He was awarded the Medal of Honor
for action on 10/13/1864 at Buzzard's Roost Gap, GA.
(With only 41 men, defended and held blockhouse against
attack of Hood's division for nearly 10 hours)

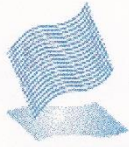
Sources used by Historical Data Systems, Inc.:

- Illinois: Roster of Officers and Enlisted Men
 - Deeds of Valor. How our Soldier-heroes won the Medal of Honor
 - Medal of Honor Recipients 1863-1994
- (c) Historical Data Systems, Inc. @ www.civilwardata.com

[Home Page](#) | [Demo](#) | [E-mail HDS](#)

Historical Data Systems, Inc.
PO Box 35
Duxbury, MA 02331

Regiment History



Home

[Regiment Assignments](#)
[Regiment Casualty Analysis](#)
[Regimental Experience](#)
[Regiment Personnel](#)
[Regiment Photos](#)
[Regiment Report List](#)

ILLINOIS ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH INFANTRY (Three Years)

One Hundred and Fifteenth Infantry. - Col., Jesse H. Moore; Lieut.-Cols., William Kinman, George A. Poteet; Majs., George A. Poteet, John W. Lapham. This regiment was ordered into the field from Camp Butler on Oct. 4, 1862. It reported to Maj.-Gen. Wright at Cincinnati, Ohio, on the 6th and, on the same day, crossed over into Kentucky, where it reported to Brig.-Gen. A. J. Smith. It was transferred to Tennessee, marched against Van Dorn during the month of March, 1863, and drove him across Duck river. It then returned to camp and remained there till June 1, occasionally skirmishing with the enemy. On June 24 it marched with the Army of the Cumberland against the Confederate army under Gen. Bragg and drove it across the Tennessee. On Sept. 19, it engaged the enemy on the extreme left upon the field of Chickamauga, losing 6 men. On the following day it engaged the enemy on Gen. Thomas' right, at 1 p. m., and after a most fearful struggle held the ground till night, half the entire command being cut down. It participated in all the engagements around Chattanooga and Missionary ridge, losing in the campaign about 245 in killed, wounded and captured. In Feb. 1864, it marched with a detachment of the Army of the Cumberland against Dalton, Ga., and spent 10 days feeling the enemy, losing 6 men in the expedition. In the spring it entered on the Atlanta campaign and on May 7 led the charge on Tunnel Hill, Ga., driving the enemy through Buzzard Roost gap. It was in battle at Resaca, stubbornly sustaining a charge upon the left flank, for which the regiment was commended in orders. It lost in that contest about 40 men. There were inscribed by orders upon the regimental banner the names of all the principal engagements of the Military division of the Mississippi, which resulted in the fall of Atlanta, and the regiment lost, during the campaign, about 100 men. When Hood started northward and was marching on Chattanooga, Co. D occupied a blockhouse at Buzzard Roost gap, and held in check Hood's army for 10 hours, refusing to surrender the gap till the blockhouse was nearly demolished and rendered untenable. One third of the company of 41 in the aggregate was killed or wounded and the remainder surrendered. The regiment took an active part in the engagements which resulted in the destruction of Bragg's old veteran army. These were its last engagements and it went into camp near Nashville, Tenn., where it remained until mustered out On June 11, 1865.

Source: The Union Army, vol. 3

[Regiment Assignments](#) | [Regiment Casualty Analysis](#)
[Regiment Personnel Listing](#) | [Regimental Report List](#)
[Home Page](#) | [Demo](#) | [E-mail HDS](#)

Historical Data Systems, Inc.