

## The Story of American Heroism (with others)



Excerpt from The Story of American Heroism: Thrilling Narratives of Personal Adventures During the Great Civil War, as Told by the Medal Winners and Roll of Honor Men During the more than a third of a century that has passed since the close of the Civil War, certain facts have come to be accepted which were existent, though ignored, at the time. One of these is that the valor and devotion were not on one side only. For every splendid burst of valor by the man in blue there was another by him who wore the gray. The great war was a struggle to the death between men of the same blood and language and race instincts; between men who fought all the harder because they had once for all overstepped the natural boundary of race. But each side must arrange its own rewards, and he who lost the contest could never claim a distinction from him who was the victor. In this natural fact lies the reason, and the only reason now, why he who wears the medal of honor must also have worn the blue. In a sense it was awarded to him by the God of Battles, but whoever wears it knows that it was dearly bought. Early in the great war General E. D. Townsend urged the importance of decorating our soldiers, with medals or otherwise, for gallantry on the battlefield. The precedent was old. Every nation had followed the plan, and experience had long since demonstrated its justice and its utility. But there were objections. General Scott, then commander-in-chief, opposed the plan on the ground that it was contrary to the spirit of our institutions. The first move in the direction of a decoration was the act of Congress which was passed December 12, 1861, authorizing two hundred medals to be prepared which shall be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen and mariners as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities, during the present war. It was an

act whose conservatism is shown by its limited scope. This was followed by a resolution, July, 1862, authorizing an award of medals of honor to enlisted men of the army also. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at [www.forgottenbooks.com](http://www.forgottenbooks.com) This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

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