

**A FINE WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR MEDAL TO A 1ST LIEUTENANT, 2ND WEST VIRGINIA CAVALRY WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT GENERAL LEE'S SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE IN APRIL 1865, PREVIOUSLY A SERGEANT, CAPTAIN GILMORE'S COMPANY, 1ST WEST VIRGINIA CAVALRY, HIS REGIMENT COVERED ITSELF WITH GLORY DURING THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN**



**WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR MEDAL 'ABIJAH B. FARMER. 1<sup>ST</sup> LIEUT 2<sup>ND</sup> REG CAV VOLS'. SUSPENSION CLASP REPLACED BY SILVER AND ENAMEL PINBACK CORPS BADGE, SUSPENDED BY A CHAIN**

Abijah B Farmer, aged 27, enlisted into Captain Gilmore's Company, 1st West Virginia Cavalry as a Sergeant on 24 July 1861. Having been promoted Quartermaster Sergeant, he reenlisted as a Veteran Volunteer on 30 November 1863, transferring to the Company L, 2nd West Virginia Cavalry and was promoted Sergeant Major on 6 August 1864. Commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Company A, by order of General Sheridan on 4 December 1864 and served as Acting Adjutant. He was advanced to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant of Company C on 11 January 1865 and mustered out of service on 30 June 1865.

Captain Gilmore's Company was formed as the Pennsylvania Dragoons, became a company in the First (West) Virginia Cavalry before later joining the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry. From 'History of the Second Regiment, West Virginia Cavalry Volunteers';



*'George Washington Gilmore formed a company of cavalry independently at the request of General George B McClellan and Gilmore was its captain. Gilmore's company was originally called the Pennsylvania Dragoons and was formed July 1861 with men from Fayette County Pennsylvania. An example of it fighting detached is the Wytheville Raid, where it fought with an additional company from the 1st West Virginia Cavalry, an infantry regiment, and another cavalry regiment. Beginning July 14, 1863, Gilmore's Company served with the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry, and finished its service as Company L of that regiment'*

The 1st West Virginia Cavalry saw a good deal of action during 1862 and from May 1863, were conspicuous for the part they played leading up to, including and after the battle of Gettysburg:

*"..In the spring of 1863 the regiment received its Spencer rifles, which added materially to its efficiency in its subsequent fights under the reckless and dashing Kilpatrick. It bore the leading part in repelling a charge of General J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry in the streets of Hanover, Pennsylvania, taking Colonel Payne and over a hundred of his men prisoners. It covered and held out guns against Stuart's charge at Hunterstown, Pennsylvania. It was conspicuous for holding the low gap at the left of Round Top the last day's fight at Gettysburg, against vastly superior numbers; repeatedly repelling assaults, and finally forming an important part of the charging column under the glorious Farnsworth, who penetrated the enemy lines near the Devil's Den, and hastened the retreat of the Confederate army from the battlefield of Gettysburg. It was also foremost in the charging and fighting of Kilpatrick's division in its pursuit of Lee's army. At the pass at Monterey, single-handedly, during the night of the 4th of July, under Major Charles E Capehart, it captured or destroyed upward of eight miles of Lee's ammunition and supply train, and took as prisoners an entire Confederate brigade, with its commanding general. It also fought with the best at Boonesboro, Hagerstown, Williamsport and Falling Waters..."*

During his service with the 2<sup>nd</sup> West Virginia Cavalry, McVay would also have seen a good deal of active service, in particular during the Appomattox campaign, 28 March to 9 April 1865, the Regiment being present at Appomattox Court House and the surrender of General Lee's army.

<https://wvcivilwar.com/union-regiments/1st-west-virginia-cavalry/>

Like British Campaign medals, these medals were issued to soldiers who fought for the Union during the Civil War. West Virginian was one of the few States that authorised such a medal to veterans, the medal being based on the British Crimea and Ohio veterans medal. It was issued in 1866. This example sold with full service musters and pension papers (large amount). The medals are impressed with the soldiers details on the rim, in a similar style to British WW1 medals and soldiers details are very easily researched, in fact more information can be obtained as the medals themselves give Company details, not just Regiment. Copies of soldier enlistment, discharge and muster details are kept in the US archives.

Medals were issued from three dies:

Class I -- "Honorably Discharged" - Most of the 26,000 medals struck were this type

The Class II -- "Killed in Battle" - Only 775 were struck

Class III -- "For Liberty" -- medals issued for those officers and soldiers who had died of disease and wounds received in battle - 3,320 of these were struck

### **1st West Virginia Cavalry during McVay's service:**

SERVICE.—Action at Carnifex Ferry, W. Va., September 10, 1861 (Detachment). Romney, W. Va., October 26 (Co. "A"). Guyandotte, W. Va., November 10 (Detachment). Wirt Court House November 19. Capture of Suttonville, Braxton Court House, November 29. In support of Garfield's operations in Eastern Kentucky against Humphrey Marshall December 23, 1861, to January 30, 1862 (Detachment). Skirmishes in Clay, Braxton and Webster Counties December 29-31. Jennies Creek, Ky., January 7, 1862 (Detachment). Regiment engaged in scouting, picket and outpost duty and guarding Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in West Virginia till March, 1862. Expedition to Blue's Gap



January 6-7. Hanging Rock Pass, Romney, January 7. Bloomery Gap February 13. Bloomen February 15. Advance on Winchester, Va., March 5-12 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Phillippi March 20 (4 Cos.). Battle of Winchester March 23. Monterey April 12 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Buffalo Gap May 3 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). McDowell May 7 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Scouts to Roane and Clay Counties May 8-21. Giles Court House May 10 (Detachment). Strasburg June 1. Cross Keys June 8. Port Republic June 9. White Plains June 10. Expedition to Madison Court House, Culpeper Court House and Orange Court House July 12-17. Near Culpeper July 12. Cedar Mountain August 9 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Orange Court House August 13. Pope's Campaign in Northern Virginia August 16-September 2. Rapidan August 18. Freeman's Ford, Hazel River, August 22 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Kelly's Ford August 22. Sulphur Springs August 23. Waterloo Bridge August 23-25. Buckland Bridge, near Gainesville, August 28 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Groveton August 29 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Bull Run August 30 (Cos. "C," "E" and "L"). Lewis Ford August 30. Chantilly September 1. (2 Cos. at Antietam, Md., September 16-17.) Ashby's Gap September 22. Expedition to Thoroughfare Gap October 17-18. Gainesville October 18. Near Warrenton November 4. Reconnoissance to Snicker's Ferry and Berryville November 28-30. Snicker's Ferry November 30. Moorefield, W. Va., December 3 (1 Co.). Near Moorefield, W. Va., January 5, 1863. Cockletown, Pocahontas County, W. Va., January 22. Scout from Centreville to Falmouth February 27-28. Beverly April 24 (Co. "A"). Warrenton Junction May 3 (Detachment). Winchester June 13-15 (Cos. "C" and "K"). Hanover, Pa., June 30. Gettysburg, Pa., July 1-3. Hunterstown July 2. Monterey Gap July 4. Smithburg July 5. Hagerstown July 6. Boonsboro July 8. Hagerstown July 11-13. Falling Water July 14. Expedition from Fayetteville, W. Va., to Wytheville July 13-15 (2 Cos.). Shanghai July 16 (Co. "A"). Wytheville July 18-19 (Co. "A"). Near Hedgesville and Martinsburg July 18-19 (Co. "A"). Near Gaines' Cross Roads July 23. McConnellsburg, Pa., July 30. Averill's Raid through Hardy, Pendleton, Highland, Bath, Greenfield and Pocahontas Counties, W. Va., August 25-31 (Co. "A"). Rocky Gap, near White Sulphur Springs, August 26-27 (Co. "A"). Expedition to Port Conway September 1-3. Culpeper Court House September 13. Raccoon Ford September 14-16. Robertson's Station September 16. Raccoon Ford September 17-18. White's Ford September 22-23. Bristoe Campaign October 9-22. James City and Bethesda Church October 10. Near Culpeper, Brandy Station and Griffinsburg October 11. Gainesville October 14. Groveton October 17-18. Gainesville, New Baltimore, Buckland's Mill and Haymarket October 19. Catlett's Station November 7.



## 2nd West Virginia Cavalry during McVay's service:

Scammon's Demonstration from the Kanawha Valley December 8-25 1863. Meadow Bluff December 11. Lewisburg and Greenbrier River December 12. Scout in Cabell and Wayne Counties March 16-18, 1864. Averill's Raid on Virginia & Tennessee Railroad May 5-19. Princeton, Grassy Lick Cove, near Wytheville, Wytheville, Ingle and Cove Gap May 10. Salt Pond and Pond Mountain Gap May 13. Hunter's Raid on Lynchburg, Va., May 26-July 1. Staunton June 8. Newport June 10. Lexington June 11. Near Buchanan June 13. New London June 16. Otter Creek June 16. Diamond Hill June 17. Lynchburg June 17-18. Liberty June 19. Buford's Gap June 20. Catawba Mountains and near Salem June 21. Cove Gap June 23. Snicker's Ferry July 17-18. Carter's Farm July 20. Newtown July 22. Kernstown, Winchester, July 24. Martinsburg July 25. Hagerstown July 29. McConnellsburg, Pa., July 30. Hancock, Md., July 31. Near Moorefield August 7. Williamsport August 26. Martinsburg August 31. Bunker Hill September 2-3. Near Bunker Hill September 5. Near Stephenson's Depot September 5. Darkesville September 10. Bunker Hill September 13. Near Berryville September 14. Battle of Winchester September 19. Fisher's Hill September 22. Mt. Jackson September 23-24. Forest Hill or Timberville September 24. Piedmont September 25. Brown's Gap September 26. Weyer's Cave September 26-27. Battle of Cedar Creek October 19. Dry Run October 23. Nineveh November 12. Rude's Hill, Front Royal, November 22. Expedition to Gordonsville December 19-28. Liberty Mills December 22. Jack's Shop, near Gordonsville, December 23. Near Ashby's Gap December 27. Sheridan's Raid from Winchester February 25-March 25, 1865. Mt. Crawford February 28. Waynesboro March 2. Charlottesville March 3. Augusta Court House March 10. Haydensville March 12. Beaver Dam Station March 15. White House March 26. Appomattox Campaign March 28-April 9. Dinwiddie Court House March 29-31. Five Forks April 1. Namozine Church and Scott's Corners April 2. Jettersville April 4. Sailor's Creek April 6. Stony Point April 7. Appomattox Station April 8. Appomattox Court House April 9. Surrender of Lee and his army. Expedition to North Carolina April 23-29. March to Washington, D.C., May. Grand Review May 23. Mustered out June 30, 1865.



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