

A SCARCE AND INTERESTING WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR 'FOR LIBERTY' TYPE MEDAL TO A SERGEANT IN THE 3RD WEST VIRGINIA CAVALRY WHO AFTER BEING TAKEN PRISONER AT WINCHESTER IN JUNE 1863 WAS PAROLED BUT WAS LATER REPORTED A DESERTER AND DIED IN CONFEDERATE HANDS AT CHARLESTON IN FEBRUARY 1864



WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR MEDAL 'FOR LIBERTY TYPE, 'BASILL. BURTON. CO B 3RD REG CAV VOLTS'

Basil Burton, aged 39, enlisted into company E, 3rd West Virginia Cavalry on 24 October 1862. Promoted Corporal on 1 November 1862 and Sergeant, March/April 1863, having transferred to company B at some point.

He was taken prisoner at Winchester, VA on 15 June 1863 and confined at Richmond, VA. However he was paroled at Annapolis a month later and appears to have remained at Camp Parole. A letter from his Commanding Officer on 14 October applying for furlough for Burton tells how his wife had died in August 1863, *'leaving his family without protection and his property in an unsettled state..'*

Burton was given furlough for 10 days on 29 October 1863 but reportedly failed to return after this. It is not clear what happened next for on 8 December Sergeant Burton was reported as a deserter and died in hospital on Charleston on 26 February 1864. Charleston of course was an important Confederate held city which did not fall until 1865. Burton's records are a little confusing or lacking after he was reported a deserter but since he died in Charleston, its quite possible he was taken

prisoner again when returning from furlough and records weren't recorded; did he die of wounds or disease?? Clearly needs further research.



Sold with copy musters (digital), which includes POW records etc.

THE MEDAL

West Virginian was one of the few States that authorised such a medal to Union Army veterans, the medal being based on the British Crimea and Ohio veterans medal. Three different disc/suspension designs were issued, a) Honorably Discharged, b) For Liberty (died of wounds/sickness), c) Killed in Battle. Issued in 1866, in all 26,000 of these medals were minted, although a large amount were never claimed. They were all officially impressed with the soldiers details on the rim, in a similar style to British WW1 medals. These medals are often found minus their suspension.

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

<https://wvcivilwar.com/union-regiments/3rd-west-virginia-cavalry/>

1st West Virginia Cavalry during Burton's service:

Aldie October 9. Near Bristoe Station October 24. Chester Gap November 16. Dumfries December 12. Wardensville December 22 and 25. Petersburg, W. Va., January 3, 1863 (Detachment). Williamsport, Md.. February 9. Truce Fork, Mud River, W. Va., February 20. Winchester March 19. Reconnaissance toward Wardensville and Strasburg April 20. Fisher's Hill, Strasburg Road, April 22. Lambert's Run April 22. Near Simpson's Creek April 30. Grove Church May 4. Janelew May 5 (Co. "E"). Strasburg May 6. Operations about Front Royal, Road Ford and Buck's Ford, May 12-16. Piedmont Station May 16. Brandy Station and Beverly Ford June 9. Winchester June 13-15 (Cos. "D" and "E").