DEEDS OF VALOR

FROM RECORDS IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

HOW AMERICAN HEROES WON THE

MEDAL OF HONOR

HISTORY OF OUR RECENT WARS AND EXPLORATIONS

FROM PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND RECORDS OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN WHO WERE REWARDED BY CONGRESS FOR MOST CONSPICUOUS ACTS OF BRAVERY ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, ON THE HIGH SEAS AND IN ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS.

AMONG OTHER RECORDS THE STIRRING ADVENTURES OF:

Admiral W. S. SCHLEY
Admiral GEO. DEWEY
Lieut-Gen'l NELSON A. MILES
Maj.-Gen'l WM. R. SHAFTER
Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT
Admiral D. D. PORTER

Admiral GEO. W. MELVILLE
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Illustrated

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FORT HUGER TAKEN BY BOLD AND ALMOST RECKLESS BRAVERY



HAZARD STEVENS,
Captain, and A. A. G., U. S. Vols.
Highest rank attained: Brevet Brig-Gen., U. S. V.
Born at Newport, R. I., June 9, 1842.

On the 19th of April, 1863, the enemy appeared in heavy force upon the line of the Nansemond River, Va., planting batteries at a number of points, threatening to force a passage, and compelling a few unarmored gun-boats which assisted in the defense, improvised from ferry-boats and the like, to shift their position to avoid destruction. Some five miles below the town the river was narrowed by a salient point on the opposite, or the enemy's side, known as Hill's Point. Here was an old earthwork — Fort Huger — erected by the Confederates during the first year of the war. They occupied this with a battery of five guns, and all efforts to dislodge, or silence them by the fire of the gun-boats and artillery from the opposite bank proved abortive. One gun-boat

was almost destroyed, being struck over a hundred times by shot and shell, and the others were repulsed. Five small gun-boats above the fort were cut off from escape by its fire, and their destruction became a question of only a few days, or even hours.

Such was the state of affairs when General Getty, Captain Hazard Stevens,



"STRUGGLED ASHORE WAIST DEEP IN THE WATER"

and Lieutenant R. H. Lamson of the Navy, who commanded the gun-boats, rode to that part of the line opposite Fort Huger to observe it more closely.

Captain Stevens and Lieutenant Lamson climbed a tree near by to obtain a better view, but the more closely it was scanned, the more formidable and unapproachable the fort appeared. Finally, Captain Stevens declared, that the only way to silence the fort was to cross the river and take it. Lieutenant Lamson responded, that he would furnish the boats, if General Getty would furnish the troops, whereupon the gallant fellows hastened to lay the suggestion before the general.

He adopted it at once. As rapidly as possible a detachment of 270 men was embarked on one of the gun-boats, at a landing some two miles above the fort. General Getty went aboard and accompanied the expedition in person. A canvas screen was drawn up all around the deck, effectually concealing the troops.

The boat steamed rapidly down the stream, followed by the other gun-boats, all firing their guns and blowing their whistles. The enemy, observing the leader, and supposing that she was about to try to run past the battery, shotted guns until she should come abreast, and within fifty yards of the fort as the channel ran, all ready to blow her out of the water.

Just above the work, the vessel was run into the bank, but, glancing on a pile, she struck some forty or fifty feet from the shore. At this juncture, Captain Stevens leaped off the deck of the vessel, calling upon the troops to follow him, and struggled ashore, waist deep in mud and water. He was immediately followed by the troops. They waded in, climbed the steep bank, made for the fort, and stormed it on the run, though the enemy opened a hot fire of musketry, and reversed and fired one of their guns on the attacking party.

The capture of five guns, nine officers, and one hundred and thirty men, the rescue of five gun-boats, and the occupation of a point of vital importance, were the results of this achievement, one of the most brilliant of the war, accomplished, too, with a loss of only four killed and ten wounded.