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Sgt. Andrew J. Tozier, Medal of Honor Recipient of the Twentieth Maine

JAMES A. CHRISTIAN

The Medal of Honor for Andrew Jackson Tozier arrived by registered parcel post at his Litchfield, Maine, home in late September 1898. Bvt. Maj. Gen. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Tozier's former Twentieth Maine colonel, had successfully petitioned the War Department to award the prestigious medal to Tozier in recognition of his courageous defense of the regimental flag on July 2, 1863, at Gettysburg—some thirty-five years earlier.

The action for which Sergeant Tozier received the Medal of Honor was capsulized in the citation: "At the crisis of the engagement, this soldier, a color bearer, stood alone in an advanced position, the regiment having been borne back, and defended his colors with musket and ammunition picked up at his feet."¹ Michael Shaara memorialized the Twentieth Maine's heroic defense of Little Round Top in his 1975 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Killer Angels*. A major strong point of Shaara's novel is the painstaking attention he shows to placing actual historical personages, even relatively minor ones, in their accurate historical settings and relationships. Accordingly, Shaara did not fail to identify Tozier as the Twentieth Maine color-bearer at Gettysburg. The movie *Gettysburg*, which is the screen adaptation of Shaara's novel, includes a scene where Chamberlain briefly engages Tozier, who is standing with the regimental colors.

How are you, Andrew?
I'm fine, sir. And you?
A bit worn.
The boys are putting up a hell of a fight.
They are indeed.²

¹ Medal of Honor file of Andrew J. Tozier, #515,221, National Archives, Washington, DC.

² *Gettysburg*, directed by Ronald Maxwell (Atlanta: Turner Pictures, 1993).

However, Tozier is not shown loading and firing a rifle while standing alone with the flag—the singular action that would later earn him the Medal of Honor.

Defending the Sacred Trust

The Civil War color guard was composed of one color sergeant, who bore the flag, and a small number of color corporals, whose responsibility it was to defend the color-bearer and the flag. The color sergeant position was viewed within the regiment as a special post of honor. As the color-bearer always drew concentrated fire from an enemy intent on capturing his colors, this soldier had to be one of the bravest men in the regiment. Not the sacrifice of his life nor any cost in regimental lives was deemed too high a price to keep the colors safe from capture. Correspondingly, the loss of the regimental colors to capture was considered a great disgrace for that regiment.

Many years after the war, Chamberlain would recall Tozier's almost-transfigured image standing alone with the flag. The battle's opening discharges had virtually vanquished the small color guard unit, and the support companies on either side of the color guard had also sustained heavy casualties. Chamberlain recalled the scene at the center of his line:

I first thought some optical illusion imposed upon me. But as forms emerged through the drifting smoke, the truth came into view. The cross fire had cut keenly; the center had been almost shot away; only two of the color guard had been left, and they fighting to fill the whole space; and in the center, wreathed in battle smoke, stood the Color-Sergeant, Andrew Tozi-



This lithograph by artist Nick Korolev titled “Sacred Trust” depicts Sergeant Tozier’s stand on Little Round Top. Courtesy of Nick Korolev.

er. His color-staff planted in the ground at his side, the upper part clasped in his elbow, so holding the flag upright, with musket and cartridges seized from the fallen comrade at his side he was defending his sacred trust in the manner of the songs of chivalry.³

Bvt. Brig. Gen. Ellis Spear, then a major in command of the regiment’s left wing, also recalled Tozier’s audacious stand in postwar writings on the Twentieth Maine’s Battle at Gettysburg.

³ Joshua Chamberlain, “Bayonet! Forward”: *My Civil War Reminiscences* (Gettysburg, PA: Stan Clark Military Books, 1994), 29.

I walked to the center. It seemed to me most of the color guard were knocked out. I recall that [James A.] Knight of my company was on the ground. . . . What I most distinctly remember there, besides Knight, was the Color Sergeant [Andrew J.] Tozier, who had picked up a musket dropped by one of the killed or wounded, and with his left arm about the colors, stood loading, and firing, and chewing a bit of cartridge paper.⁴

Yet Andrew Tozier would never have made this stouthearted stand but for his transfer to the Twentieth Maine just five weeks earlier along with 119 other Second Maine soldiers. The transfer to the Twentieth Maine Regiment had not been a happy occurrence for these men. Their transfer had been ordered following the decommissioning of the Second Maine Regiment when the majority of the men, having served their two-year enlistment term,

were being discharged from the army. The 120 soldiers of the Second Maine left behind had signed enlistments papers for three years; therefore, they owed the army another year of service.

The Second Maine Regiment was a veteran-volunteer unit, raised in Bangor, Maine, in May 1861—a full fifteen months before the Twentieth Maine was formed. In its two-year existence, the Second Maine attained a proud service record, having fought valiantly on battlefields from First Bull Run to

⁴ Ellis Spear, *The Civil War Recollections of General Ellis Spear*, ed. Abbott Spear et al. (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1907), 34.

Chancellorsville. By May 1863 these men were battle worn and ready to return home. Many of the Second Maine soldiers, those who had signed three-year enlistment papers, argued that they signed the papers based on assurances that the extra term was a mere formality and that they would be free to return home when the Second Maine Regiment was disbanded. Universally, the men felt strongly that they had only signed on to fight under the Second Maine colors; and now that the flag was going home with the two-year men, these other men felt that they should be allowed to go home too.⁵

Once these 120 soldiers received confirmation that they would be held for the third year of service and transferred to another regiment, the men reacted angrily and began refusing to obey orders. Chamberlain, when initially informed of the transferring unit, had been enthused by the prospect of a bolstered Twentieth Maine. But Chamberlain's sentiments changed to dismay when he learned that the men were being transferred against their will. Even more disturbing to Chamberlain was the sight of the transferring Second Maine soldiers being marched to the Twentieth Maine encampment by bayonet-wielding guards. Chamberlain was further vexed by orders from the Fifth Army Corps commander, Brig. Gen. James Barnes, authorizing him to shoot any transferring soldier who persisted in refusing orders.

Chamberlain sympathized with the regrettable predicament in which these former Second Maine men found themselves. On May 27, 1863, he wrote to the Maine governor, Abner Coburn, to ask if something could be done to appease their grievance.

The transfer of the “three year men” of the 2d Maine has been so clumsily done, that the men were allowed to grow quite mutinous—left uncared for in their old camp after the 2d had gone for several days, & having time and provocation to work themselves up to such a pitch of mutiny that Gen Barnes had to send them to me as prisoners, liable to severe penalties for disobedience of his orders.⁶

⁵ James Mundy, *Second to None: The Story of the Second Maine Regiment* (Scarborough, ME: Harp Publications, 1992).

⁶ Joshua Chamberlain to Governor Abner Coburn, May 25, 1863, in Joshua Chamberlain, *Through Blood and Fire: The Selected Civil War Papers of Major General Joshua Chamberlain*, ed. Mark Nesbitt (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1996), 59–60.

In the historical record, Chamberlain is duly credited for his deft de-escalation of the crisis posed by these potential mutineers. Chamberlain first announced to the men that he would dispense with having them watched over by guards. He then arranged for the first sustenance the men had been allowed in days. He heard the men's complaints and then pledged to act as their advocate in presenting their grievances to the governor. Finally, in an astute move to further lessen the likelihood of instigation, Chamberlain ordered the most dissident transferees separated and divided among the Twentieth Maine's several companies.

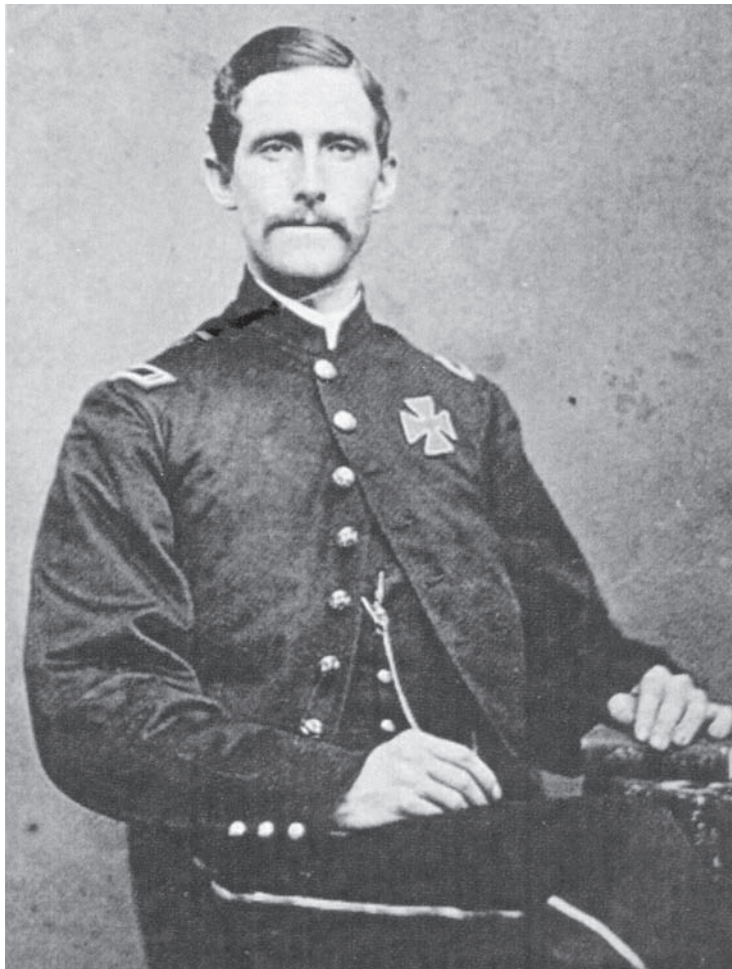
Fortunately for Chamberlain, a fresh opportunity to bond the former Second Maine soldiers to their new regiment presented itself shortly after the men were received into camp. The regular Twentieth Maine color sergeant became intoxicated and subsequently behaved insubordinately to a superior officer within the regiment. This incident resulted in the color sergeant being placed under arrest and the position of color guard sergeant coming open. Chamberlain instinctively turned to Tozier, as a ranking sergeant in the merged regiment, to assume the esteemed post of Twentieth Maine color sergeant, and Tozier accepted.⁷

Bayonets Fixed! Forward to the Right!

Sgt. Andrew Tozier displayed tremendous courage, not only in defending the regimental colors on that July 2 afternoon, but also in his unheralded role in spearheading the Twentieth Maine bayonet charge into the Confederate lines that ended the contest. Contrary to the portrayals in popular media, Chamberlain did not gather his company commanders and then extemporaneously brainstorm the plan of a bayonet charge led off by a right-wheel maneuver by his bent-back left wing. Nor did Chamberlain decide affirmatively on the strategy of a charge before at least one officer in the regiment had approached with the recommendation that they advance the battle line. In his Gettysburg postaction report to General Barnes, Chamberlain unblushingly asserted that he had ordered a bayonet charge based on his assessment that his shattered lines were about to be overrun and that the regiment was no longer served by fighting on the defensive.

⁷ Civil War soldier file for Andrew J. Tozier, Maine State Archives, Augusta, ME.

In the midst of this, our ammunition utterly failed, our fire, as it was too terribly evident, had slackened, half my left wing lay on the ground, & although I had brought two companies from the right to strengthen it, the left wing was reduced to a mere skirmish line. Officers came to me, shouting that we were “annihilated”, & men were beginning to face to the rear. I saw that the *defensive* could be maintained not an instant longer, & with a few gallant officers rallied a line, ordered “bayonets fixed,” & “forward” *at a run*.⁸



Lt. Holman S. Melcher. Courtesy of James A. Christian.

As certainly self-congratulatory as Chamberlain's account reads, the postwar writings and addresses by other battle participants attest to the fact that others, not just Chamberlain, deserve credit for the inspiration and execution of the storied bayonet charge.⁹ Two soldiers, in particular, who are due recognition in this regard are Lt. Homan Melcher, who had command of Color Company F during the fighting, and CSgt. Andrew Tozier. Concerning Lieutenant Melcher, postwar accounts of battle participants are in agreement in crediting him as the officer who first approached Chamberlain late in the battle, with the recommendation to advance the

Twentieth Maine battle line forward. Melcher recommended moving his Color Company F, then positioned to the right of the colors, to a position forward and to the left. This movement would allow his men to assume the line that the regiment's left wing had initially taken before being forced back by overwhelming Confederate fire. This early fallback action by the regiment's left wing had resulted in the abandonment of several wounded Twentieth Maine men, who were now pinned down in the middle ground between the two opposing lines.

Many of these men could be heard over the din of the battle, pleading to be brought in for aid. This is exactly what Melcher intended in recommending to Chamberlain that their line be advanced forward.

Chamberlain answered Melcher's recommendation by revealing to him that at that very instant, he had decided on the bolder action of sending a full charge of the regiment into the Confederate ranks. About this discussion, there is no disagreement between the two officers. However, what followed next deviated substantially from how the bayonet charge is portrayed in popular accounts. Based on the account of the surviving color guard soldier Pvt. Elisha Coan, Melcher, rather than Chamberlain, seized the initiative and went immediately to Tozier's position, intent on initiating the forward movement.¹⁰

⁸ Chamberlain, *Through Blood and Fire*, 81.

⁹ For the definitive account of the Twentieth Maine's fight on Little Round Top, see chapter 2, “The Death-Strewn Slopes,” in Thomas Desjardin's seminal work, *Stand Firm Ye Boys from Maine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ Holman S. Melcher, *With a Flash of His Sword: The Writings of Major Holman S. Melcher, Twentieth Maine Infantry*, ed. William B. Styple (Kearny, NJ: Belle Grove Publishing, 1994), 82–84.

Placing himself in front of Tozier and the colors, Melcher, by this account, signaled for a charge by raising his sword and proceeding a few steps ahead of Tozier directly into the nests of Confederates.

In this account, Tozier would deserve recognition for his decision to charge with the flag immediately behind Melcher, when he might reasonably have held back to await confirmation of the order directly from Chamberlain. Tozier already was performing hazardous duty, standing with the flag at his advanced position and firing. However, Tozier did not hold back and charged as instructed immediately behind Melcher, further endangering his own life while also risking the loss of his flag.

Melcher's precipitous action deprived Chamberlain of the opportunity to alert his company commanders to his intentions to order a full charge of the regiment. Ellis Spear in postwar writings staunchly denied that he ever received an order from Chamberlain to prepare for a charge. Spear explained that he only set his left wing companies in motion after observing the center position in the battle line already moving forward and immediately grasping that he should not permit a separation in the line. Spear's account further confirms that the famed Twentieth Maine right-wheel maneuver, executed by the regiment's left wing, rather than being prearranged by Chamberlain, occurred as a natural consequence of the wing swinging around to charge forward and to the right, as these men endeavored to take positions in a contiguous front in the direction that the center companies were leading.

In his 1889 remarks at the dedication of the Twentieth Maine monument at Gettysburg, Chamberlain admitted that he had not given a formal order, through all his commanders, for the men to advance.¹¹ He recalled that he called out "Bayonets!" and "Forward to the right!" as he hastened to move forward with the colors. However, Chamberlain went on to concede that more impactful than any orders he may have shouted out—which over the din of the battle would have been heard but by a few—would have been the sight of the group of officers moving forward with the colors. Chamberlain concluded his remarks with the frank acknowledgment that a center section of officers and men had already spontaneously initiated the charge even as

¹¹ Melcher, *With a Flash of His Sword*, 119–26.



Capt. Ellis Spear. Courtesy of James A. Christian.

he was enunciating the command for the regiment to charge.

The import of Chamberlain's 1889 remarks in explaining what led to the great charge is that it refocuses our attention on the pent-up tensions of the Twentieth Maine men, who were witnessing their fellow soldiers being wounded and killed about them and who were thirsting for revenge. When these soldiers spied their colors moving forward, it must have been as if a catch had been unlatched, as 150 enraged Maine men likewise sprang forward.

Born for Soldiering

But who was Andrew Tozier? Little has reached the published page regarding the life leading up to his heroic stand at Gettysburg or of his civilian life after his military service ended. Andrew Jackson Tozier was born on February 11, 1838, in Monmouth, Maine—the fifth of seven children and the third male child born to John and Theresa Tozier. Andrew Jackson, the seventh U.S. president, after whom Tozier was presumably named, had left office eleven months prior to Tozier's birth. John Tozier

likely admired President Jackson for his renowned victory over the British in the Battle of New Orleans and for his fiercely independent comportment as president. Sadly, John Tozier was an abusive patriarch, and Andrew left home during his young teenage years to seek work as a seaman. The 1860 U.S. Census, however, shows Andrew at least temporarily back from the sea and residing at his parents' home in Plymouth, Maine.¹²

After the secessionist attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the newly elected president Abraham Lincoln called for recruitment of seventy-five thousand new Federal soldiers. The Second Maine Regiment was one of the first of these units. It was recruited out of Bangor in late April and early May 1862. The ranks of the Bangor Regiment, as it was called, were filled with lumberjacks, mariners, carpenters, firemen, and the usual complement of young farm boys.

Andrew Tozier was a late recruit to the regiment, signing enlistment papers on July 15, 1861. By that time, the Second Maine, assigned to a wing of Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell's Army of Northeastern Virginia, was marching toward Vienna en route to Manassas Junction. There, on July 21, 1861, the Second Maine endured a particularly brutal and bloody baptism to war at the First Battle of Bull Run. Within the first few minutes of coming into formation in parallel with the Robinson farmhouse, the color-bearer was killed by a shot through the throat, and the soldier who next took up the fallen colors was seconds later also killed by a shot to the head. After these opening volleys, the Second Maine's losses continued to mount as their regiment was one of the last Union units to be withdrawn from the Manassas battlefield.¹³

Once united with his new regiment, Tozier evidently stood out as a private. By the time the Union army entered its winter encampments at the end of 1861, Tozier had been promoted to corporal.

Following the rout of Union forces at Bull Run, President Lincoln relieved McDowell and turned to Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan to reform the defeated troops into a new Army of the Potomac. McClellan proved excellent at organizing the troops

and bolstering their morale. But he was slow in developing an aggressive operations plan against the Confederate armies entrenched in Northern Virginia. It was not until March 1862 that McClellan deployed his army to the York Peninsula in Virginia, where his plan was to outflank the Confederate forces and then move on to Richmond.

McClellan's campaign was beset with setbacks and delays from the start. His forces encountered Confederate resistance on the Virginia Peninsula that he had not anticipated. Then, after McClellan finally extracted his forces from the peninsula, he faced delaying action by Confederate forces under the command of Gen. Joseph Johnston. The Second Maine Regiment was now a unit within the First Division of Maj. Gen. John Fitz Porter's Fifth Corps. On May 27, 1862, the regiment fought a stalwart rearguard action near Hanover Court House, Virginia. The following day, McClellan visited the Second Maine camp to personally compliment the regiment's officers and men.¹⁴

Following the severe wounding of General Johnston on June 1, 1862, at the Battle of Seven Pines, command of the Army of Northern Virginia fell to Gen. Robert E. Lee. Lee proved to be a much more aggressive adversary than Johnston had been. During the Seven Days Battle, waged the final week of June 1862, Lee relentlessly attacked McClellan's defensive lines. In the Battle of Gaines's Mill, Porter's Fifth Corps troops, including the Second Maine, sharply repulsed successive frontal attacks by the divisions of Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill and Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell. Just before dusk, however, Lee amassed a grand assault, breaching Porter's lines and sending his fatigued corps into disorganized retreat. It was during this battle that Tozier suffered a bullet wound to his left hand, which amputated his middle finger, and another bullet wound to his left ankle.

Capture!

The rout of Porter's Fifth Corps abandoned many wounded men for capture. Tozier was taken prisoner behind the Second Maine's battle line near the Watts farm, and from there he and hundreds of other captured soldiers were sent to the prison

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census, 1860, Plymouth, Penobscot County, Maine*, roll M653_445, 187, s.v. "Andrew Tozier."

¹³ Mundy, *Second to None*, 73.

¹⁴ Mundy, *Second to None*, 141-45.

camp on Richmond's Belle Island. While held there, Tozier met a prisoner from the Seventh Maine. The soldier, Pvt. Winfield Norcross, was suffering with festering wounds to his left neck, left shoulder, and right leg. Though no doubt experiencing some agony from his own fresh wounds, Tozier began nursing Norcross's wounds. Some twenty-seven years later, in 1889, Tozier provided an affidavit in support of Norcross's application for a full military disability pension. Tozier's affidavit is notable for the witness it bears to Tozier's care and compassion for a fellow soldier under what certainly were very trying circumstances.

I received a wound of the left hand at Gaines' Mill Va June 27th 1862 and was taken prisoner this same day and carried to Richmond Va.

I first met and became acquainted with said Winfield S. Norcross in rebel prison at Richmond Va on or about July 8th 1862, he having been taken prisoner at Savage Station Va on or about the 29th of June 1862. He was suffering when I first met him as aforesaid from a gunshot wound of neck and left shoulder and from a gunshot wound of right leg below the knee. I know of his wounds from helping take care of him. He was in a very debilitated condition from his loss of blood. I saw the wounds of neck and leg and helped him dress them many times. While we were in prison together, he also complained of a severe pain in his left side about the heart & had weak & fainting spells. I used to bring water and bathe his wounds when they were dressed, also bathed his side when he suffered from attacks of pain. We were paroled at the same time & carried to Chester U.S. Hospital and remained together until he was discharged in Oct. 1862.¹⁵

Tozier, Norcross, and the other captured Union soldiers held at Belle Island were fortunate in that their capture occurred during the early years of the war before the North adopted the strategy of refusing prisoner exchanges. Tozier was held prisoner for only five weeks before he was exchanged and paroled on August 3, 1862, at City Point, Virginia.¹⁶ Tozier and Norcross were then transported to the U.S. General Military Hospital at Chester, Pennsyl-

¹⁵ Pension file for Winfield S. Norcross, Civil War, certificate #12278, National Archives, Washington, DC.

¹⁶ File folder of Andrew J. Tozier.

vania, where they were admitted August 13. Following Norcross's release from the military hospital in October, he was discharged from the army on account of a disabled left arm. Tozier was released at the same time to return to the Second Maine. Upon reuniting with his old regiment on November 1, Tozier received a promotion to the rank of sergeant.

In the latter half of 1863, after Gettysburg, Tozier continued his duties as a Twentieth Maine sergeant as the Union army crossed into Virginia in pursuit of General Lee's army. Then, in the winter of 1863–64, Tozier was detached from the Twentieth Maine to the Fifth Corps ambulance corps. In the performance of these duties, which included removing wounded men from the battlefields of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House, Tozier undoubtedly beheld many horrific sights and endured the piteous pleas of many wounded and dying men. On May 26, 1864, while serving in this capacity, Tozier received his final war wound. A shell fragment struck him on the upper-left midsection of his head, rendering him prostrate. Thankfully, however, on this occasion, Tozier was not abandoned behind a retreating Union line. Rather, he was picked up and taken to the field hospital, where he remained into July. Then, on July 15, 1864, with his pledged three-year commitment satisfied, Andrew Tozier was discharged from the army.

A Soldier Acclimates to Civilian Life

In his return to civilian life, Tozier may have struggled to establish a steady source of income. In February 1865 Tozier married Elizabeth Bolden, and two years later the couple welcomed their first child, Andrew J. Tozier Jr. In June 1865 Tozier applied for and eventually received approval for a veteran's disability pension of eight dollars per month. Maine tax records for the year 1866 also show that Tozier was connected, in some fashion, with the operation of a bowling alley in Fairfield, Maine.¹⁷

On the night of August 29, 1865, Tozier and a brother-in-law burglarized a Livermore Falls goods store, making off with several high-priced overcoats. Tozier's involvement in this burglary was not uncovered until four years later. Following his arrest, trial, and conviction, Tozier, on February 7,

¹⁷ U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists, Record Group 58, *Maine Monthly and Special Lists, District 3, 1864–66*, National Archives, Washington, DC, digital image, accessed February 1, 2015, <http://www.ancestry.com>.



Col. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. Courtesy of the National Archives.

1870, was sentenced to five years' hard labor at the Maine State Prison in Thomason.¹⁸ Fortunately for Tozier, at that time, Joshua Chamberlain had just entered his fourth and final term as Maine governor. Chamberlain waited only three months and five days into Tozier's imprisonment before pardoning him.¹⁹ In addition, Chamberlain took action to guard against Tozier's recidivism by bringing Tozier, his wife, and their four-year-old son into his Brunswick home and providing income to the couple by employing them as attendants.

The Toziers resided with the Chamberlains for an unrecorded period of time, which was in any case in excess of two years. When Elizabeth Tozier gave birth in 1879 to the couple's second child, the

¹⁸ "Justice Finally Triumphs," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 9, 1870.

¹⁹ Lewis Bunker Rohrbach, *Maine State Prisons, 1824-1915* (Rockport, ME: Picton Press, 2001), 224-25.

Toziers honored their time with the Chamberlains by naming the girl Grace, which had been the name of the Chamberlain's daughter, aged thirteen when the Toziers first came to stay with the family.

By 1880 the Toziers had moved on from the Chamberlain home, and Tozier was operating a farm in the Cumberland, Maine, area. He was still receiving the meager government assistance of eight dollars per month from the veteran's disability pension. Over the next twenty-five years, Tozier sought to establish himself financially in various locales around the state before finally settling down to farm in the Litchfield, Maine, area.

The Personal Ravishes of War

In 1908, at age sixty-seven, Tozier underwent a government physician's examination as part of the required process in seeking to have his disability pension increased. At the start of this examination, Tozier was asked to make a summary statement specifying the physical ailments he attributed to injuries incurred during his army service. Tozier responded, "Gunshot wounds pains me all the time, I have headache, my left hand is weak, am lame in my ankle, heart pains me."²⁰

The physician's report gave ample evidence that Tozier's hard life, which included injuries he sustained in the army, had left him with significant disabilities. The physician reported the amputation, at its origin, of the middle finger of Tozier's left hand and also noted that the scar tissue surrounding the wound prevented Tozier from being able to bend his adjacent index and ring fingers sufficiently as to form a tight grip. The inside of Tozier's left ankle, where a scar evidenced a bullet wound, was described as "tumorified," that is to say so grossly tense and swollen as to appear deformed. The physician reported tenderness in the area of a scar over the upper-left midsection of Tozier's scalp, where he had sustained the shrapnel wound. And the physician also reported tenderness over the left side of Tozier's chest, where Tozier reported he had previously been glanced by a Confederate cannonball.

The physician's findings during his examination of Tozier's heart and circulatory system were more ominous than those noted on his head and extremities exam. He first noted that Tozier's heart rhythm

²⁰ File folder of Andrew J. Tozier.

was irregular and that its apical impulse was feeble. Listening to Tozier's heart, the physician discerned the characteristic murmur of mitral valve insufficiency, which in the context of Tozier's feeble apical impulse confirmed the diagnosis of chronic, severe heart failure. As further confirmation of this diagnosis, the physician reported that Tozier's face, hands, and feet, already cyanotic in coloration at rest, became even more markedly so when Tozier was made to perform some exercise during the examination.

The report appended to Tozier's request for an increase in his disability award should have left little doubt that Tozier, at this stage in his life, was a worn and seriously ill individual. However, with the acceptance of this report by the Pensions Bureau, Tozier's monthly disability award was only increased four dollars, to twelve dollars per month.

Through his midlife and later years, Andrew Tozier was active in the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic in Litchfield, Maine. He represented the post in a number of GAR gatherings across the region. Along with other local Maine veterans, Tozier also was instrumental in placing a soldier's memorial monument at the entrance of the Litchfield Plains Cemetery, where it stands today.

Andrew Jackson Tozier finally succumbed to heart failure in Litchfield, Maine, on March 28, 1910. He was seventy-two years old. His had been a life as rugged and as vital as the Maine coastline that had attracted him even as a teenager.

Conduct beyond What Could Have Been Required . . .

Fifteen months prior to his death, on Christmas Eve 1908, Tozier and his wife were in Rockland, Maine, for a dinner engagement at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Winfield Norcross, Norcross having gone on from the army to become a medical doctor. A reporter from the *Lewiston Evening Journal* met with Tozier there to take note of his recollections of his Medal of Honor stand at Gettysburg. Reflecting on events then forty-five years in the past, Tozier spoke with the mixed emotions of deep sorrow and yet cheerfulness for his deliverance on that day.

We had about 500 men in our regiment when we reached the summit of Little Round Top and

then commenced a tragic scene. My color guards were all shot around me in a few moments and then the smoke was so thick that I could see but a few feet away. My regiment had changed position and fell back a short distance and before I realized it I was standing entirely alone in front of the line holding the colors with one arm and firing with the other. Of course I was the target for many bullets, but I didn't get scratched.²¹

On March 28, 1898, Joshua Chamberlain wrote to Russell A. Alger, President William McKinley's secretary of war, to recommend that Tozier be awarded the Medal of Honor.

I have recently had occasion to examine with some care the private records of my late commands in the war for the Union. In reviewing the action of the Twentieth Regiment, Maine Volunteers at Gettysburg July 2nd. 1863, I came upon my minutes of the behavior of Color Sergeant Andrew J. Tozier who stood at the angle of the line when I found it necessary to refuse my left wing in meeting the assault of Law's Brigade of Hood's division attempting to turn my position. . . .

At a crisis of the engagement when our whole center was for a moment broken and the enemy about to overpower us, I saw, as a thick cloud of smoke lifted, Sergeant Tozier standing alone at his advanced post,—two center companies having lost nearly half their numbers, and the Color Guard entirely cut away,—the color-staff rested on the ground and supported in the hollow of his shoulder, while with a musket and cartridge-box he had picked up at his feet he was defending his color; presenting a figure which seemed to have paralyzed the enemy in front of him, who might otherwise have captured the color.

This was the object which I made the rallying point for the Regiment, and the center guide for the following charge.

I made no more special mention of this in my official report, as I thought then that no one there had done more than a soldier's duty, and Sergeant Tozier in that feeling declined the promotion I offered him to a lieutenantcy. I feel now, however, that his conduct was somewhat beyond what

²¹ "At Little Round Top: Andrew J. Tozier of Litchfield Held aloft the Flag; A Thrilling Tale," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, December 24, 1908.

could have been required and expected as a part of duty; . . . and I respectfully recommend that a medal of honor be awarded to Color Sergeant Andrew J. Tozier of the Twentieth Regiment, Maine Volunteers, for distinguished personal gallantry in defending the colors of that Regiment in the battle of Gettysburg July Second 1863.²²

“Conduct somewhat beyond what could have been required and expected as a part of duty”—these were Chamberlain’s words in capsulizing why CSgt. Andrew Tozier should have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Following the war, Tozier lived a life quite plebeian and even detoured for a time down a criminal pathway. Yet Tozier’s

²² Joshua Chamberlain to Russell A. Alger, March 28, 1898, Medal of Honor file of Andrew J. Tozier, #515,221, National Archives, Washington, DC.

record of military service reveals a man quite extraordinary in terms of dutifulness, courage, and compassion. And in Tozier’s greatest hour of peril, he stood firm, defending his sacred trust in such an intrepid fashion as can only enhance our reverence for the consecrated ground at the southern tip of Little Round Top.

.....
James A. Christian is an internal medicine physician providing services to several federal occupational health clinics in the Baltimore–Washington, DC area. Dr. Christian holds a medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School located in Dallas, Texas. He currently lives with his wife (and resident editor), Ms. Nina Medlock, in Silver Spring, Maryland. Dr. Christian has research interests in what fates followed for Civil War soldiers after the war and in how the deaths of soldiers killed during the war impacted their families.