



Commissioner Nick Fish
City of Portland

May 9, 2011

Senator Jeff Merkley
313 Hart SOB
Washington DC 20510

RE: Medal of Honor for Sergeant Henry Lincoln Johnson

Dear Senator Merkley,

I write to urge you to support the efforts of Senators Chuck Schumer and Ron Wyden to secure the Medal of Honor for World War I hero Sgt. Henry Lincoln Johnson.

My interest in this cause is personal. My grandfather, former New York Congressman Hamilton Fish, Sr., was a Captain in the 369th Regiment Infantry. He fought with Sgt. Johnson in France and received both the Croix de Guerre and a Silver Star for his service.

Sgt. Johnson was the first American to receive the Croix de Guerre with Gold Palm, France's highest military honor. President Teddy Roosevelt called him "one of the five bravest men who fought in World War I." Because he served with a French unit, under French flag, during a time of segregation in our armed forces, he has been unjustly denied this country's highest military honor.

In order to reopen this matter, new information must be submitted to the Secretary of the Army. Recently, Senators Schumer and Wyden unearthed previously unknown documents that provide a basis for correcting this historic injustice.

Senator Schumer plans to present this new evidence and the “Reconsideration of Downgraded Medal of Honor Recommendation on Behalf of Sergeant Henry Johnson” to John McHugh, Secretary of the Army, on May 14, 2011.

The new evidence includes:

- (1) A May 1918 memo from General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, confirming the heroism of Sgt. Johnson. This chain-of-command endorsement is required for the Medal of Honor.
- (2) A letter from Colonel William Hayward, Sgt. Johnson’s superior officer, to Johnson’s wife, read into the Congressional Record by New York Representative Norman J. Gould on September 4, 1918.
- (3) The eyewitness account of Pvt. Nedom Roberts, rescued from the Germans by Sgt. Johnson on the night in question. Both men were wounded while holding the line against more than twenty German soldiers. The account is in a 1933 pamphlet found in the collection of the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond, VA.

Senator Wyden, *The Skanner* newspaper, its publisher, Bernie Foster, and my office have taken up this cause in Oregon. I urge you to do so as well.

I am enclosing additional information about Sgt. Johnson. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nick Fish
Commissioner

cc: The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
The Honorable Peter DeFazio
The Honorable Kurt Schrader
The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable David Wu
Bernie Foster, *The Skanner*