

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOR:

The Racine County Bar Association through its Committee appointed for that purpose, pray the order of the Court that there be preserved in the records thereof in memory of the late Edmund Richard Collins the following memorial of the Racine County Bar Association of the State of Wisconsin:

EDMUND RICHARD COLLINS was born August 28, 1890 in Highland, Wisconsin, and came to Racine with his parents in the Spring of the year 1897. He died of wounds received in battle near Archangel, Russia, on the 29th day of March, A.D. 1919, in his twenty-eighth year.

He received his early education in the public schools of the City of Racine, graduating from the High School in June, 1907. In September of the same year he matriculated at the University of Wisconsin. During his attendance at the University he developed in large measure those qualities of application and perseverance which distinguished him in his brief public life. Upon graduating from the University of Wisconsin he determined to broaden and expand his education by further study at an institution which would give him the opportunity of observation in a new field. Carrying out that purpose he entered the law school of the University of California, from which he graduated in June, 1916. He was admitted to practice at the Bar of that State upon his graduation.

While he was engaged in the study of the law at the University of California, he supplemented this training in theory by engaging in actual practice in the offices of a prominent legal firm in the City of Los Angeles. After his graduation he refused an attractive offer from this firm, and returned to the City of Racine, where he was associated with the firm of Simmons & Walker. For some time

thereafter he applied himself to the study of the fundamental rules of the law as announced in this jurisdiction, and because his training in the law had been received without this State, he wrote the examination for admission to the Bar of the State of Wisconsin in February, 1916. As is usual, although there were a great number of candidates, few passed the requirements satisfactorily. He was one of those who succeeded. In the Spring of 1917 he opened an office of his own and was engaged in building up a practice when Congress proclaimed the existence of a state of war between the United States and the German Empire.

During the year following his admission to the Bar, in his intercourse with his brothers in the profession, in litigated matters before court and jury, and in his association with business and professional men in this City, Edmund Collins exhibited at every point unusual ability. He seemed to possess every quality which goes to make a successful lawyer. He was sympathetic, but ever retained his poise; courteous, but naturally reserved and dignified; pleasing, but always mindful of the obligations of his high calling. That he was possessed of the qualifications which assured him especial success in the trial of causes was clearly indicated by the few appearances he made in this court. His surpassing physical vigor, the fruit of years of athletic exercise, enabled him to concentrate long hours on his problems without perceptible fatigue. His pleasant, sunny disposition defied those defeats and disappointments which are the lot of all those who come to the forum, and which attend inevitably the enterprising man.

It need not be said that he, in common with all of us, had foreseen the shock of armed conflict approaching. For many months the youth of this country examining into the

future had been preparing their souls for the coming sacrifice. In discussion he refused to be trammelled by the opinion of others. There was no slavish submission to opinion spoken by vested authority in his heart, unless reason first approved. He saw clearly, and seeing, at the moment appointed, he acted. He was in the foremost rank of those who offered themselves to their country and their flag, in those unsettled days that marked our entry into the conflict. It was significant of his character, that having come to his decision, his only anxiety was the fear that some physical defect might be discovered in him which would prevent him from giving to his country the full measure of his duty and service as he conceived it.

At Fort Sheridan, where he reported for training, he worked enthusiastically and with singleness of purpose. Applying to the new problems presented to him that faculty of concentration and analysis developed by his professional life, again aided and assisted by his perfect physique, he completed the course prescribed with success, receiving a commission as First Lieutenant on the 15th day of August, 1917. He was ordered to report for duty with the 339th Infantry Regiment at Camp Custer, Michigan, where for ten months he drilled and trained recruits, many of whom he taught the language and history of our country as a preliminary to the instruction in infantry drill regulations.

This period was the hardest of his life. He fretted at the dullness of weeks spent in shaping men to the severe requirements of the army, only to see those troops, trained and disciplined, transferred to other units destined to see service in the line of battle, where, as

he thought, he should be. And yet upon occasions when he came to Racine on furlough, he was always the center of an admiring group of friends, to whom, with the greatest relish and good humor, he recited amusing incidents of his military life in a manner that was not suggestive of the real disappointment which he felt. Those visits had an incalculable effect upon those who met and talked with him. He radiated optimism, confidence and good humor, mingled with a realizing sense of the stern and deadly business in which he was engaged - an infectious example of high courage in the face of those dark and gloomy days a year ago.

The infantry regiment to which he was assigned was part of the 85th Division. Orders from the Adjutant General's Headquarters moved the division across the Atlantic in August, 1918; but upon reaching England, the 339th, his regiment, was detached from the division and sent to Archangel, Russia. In letters written to friends about this time he speaks of this new duty without that pleasure with which he anticipated service in France, but with a soldier's cheerful acceptance of orders without question or cavil.

For several months after reaching port he was Provost-Marshal of the City of Archangel. His commanding officer was suffering from ill health to an extent that left his company at times seriously handicapped, and Lieutenant Collins was ordered to the field for duty with his unit. The little band of Americans, scarce Five Thousand all told, brigaded with less than 10,000 British and Japanese troops, gamely faced the hordes of Russians who sought to overwhelm them, beating them back by dogged heart-breaking effort throughout the winter of 1918-1919. Even after the armistice stilled the tumult on the western front this strange conflict,

so unequal, so forlorn, raged across the frozen plains of that desolate, far country.

So, far removed from outside assistance, cut off from those who knew and loved him, in a strange land, facing a ruthless and barbarous foe, Lieutenant Edmund Richard Collins fell on the 24th day of March, 1919, mortally stricken, dying ~~five days later on March 29th,~~ ^{in the course of the same day,} thus completing and fulfilling in the last and highest measure the exacting traditions of that American manhood which he so perfectly represented.

Although details of his passing are, of necessity lacking, yet we who knew him and loved him, know that he faced death as he faced the problems of life with a perfect faith in God and that humanity for which he died.

The ceaseless conflict between the forces of right and wrong goes on here as on the battle fields where he fought and died. Each one of us has his part to play in this conflict.

The cause of Liberty from the earliest times has demanded the sacrifice of the world's strongest and best. In offering such as he and the many more who shall not return from those foreign shores to which they went upon this same mission, our country has maintained its place as the guarantor of Liberty to all who are oppressed by the hand of tyranny.

It was not an undertaking for the weak or faint-hearted, none but the best and bravest could answer the call. Such was he whose memory and deeds we honor here today and we may well consider that from the lonely grave

where he lies sleeping there comes to us the call to
carry on the fight, until that country where oppressed
mankind has suffered long may, like ours, be forever
free.

Signed:

Mortimer E. Walker
Hubert H. Kanner Jr.
Michael R. Proctor

Committee.