

FRANCES ANNE PYNE RICKETTS.

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MARCH 27, 1888.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. LYNCH, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 631.]

*The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 631) for the relief of Frances Anne Pyne Ricketts, having had the same under careful consideration, respectfully submit the following report:*

James B. Ricketts, late of the United States Army, was a cadet at the United States Military Academy from September 1, 1835, to July 1, 1839, when he graduated and was appointed second lieutenant; first lieutenant, April 21, 1846; captain, August 3, 1852, and major First Artillery, June 1, 1862; breveted lieutenant-colonel U. S. Army July 21, 1861, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Bull Run, Va."; colonel U. S. Army, June 3, 1864, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Cold Harbor, Va."; brigadier-general U. S. Army, March 13, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Cedar Creek, Va." and major-general U. S. Army, March 13, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious services in the field during the war."

He was appointed brigadier-general of volunteers, July 21, 1865, and honorably mustered out as such April 30, 1866; breveted major-general of volunteers, August 1, 1864, "for gallant conduct during the war, and particularly in the battles of the campaign under General Grant, the Monocacy, under General Wallace, and Opequan, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek, in the Shenandoah campaign, under General Sheridan."

He was on duty in Texas until May, 1846, and in the war with Mexico, being engaged in the battle of Monterey, September 21–23, 1846; holding of the Reconoda Pass, February 22–23, 1847, during the battle of Buena Vista, and at the capture of the City of Mexico, in August, 1847; served at Fort Columbus, New York Harbor, to November, 1850; at New Orleans, La., to March, 1852; in Florida hostilities against the Seminole Indians to October, 1852; and in Louisiana to November 18, 1853; on recruiting service to November, 1854; in Texas to October, 1858; in Louisiana to December, 1858; in Texas April, 1860; at Fort Monroe, Va., to April, 1861; in the defenses of Washington, D. C., to July, 1861, being in command of a light battery in the capture of Alexandria, Va., May 24, 1861; Manassas campaign to July, 1861; severely wounded and captured by the enemy at Bull Run, and held a prisoner of war until January 5, 1862, when he was paroled, and in February, 1862, discharged.

From May to June 19, 1862, commanded the First Brigade, First Division, Department of Rappahannock; the Second Division of that department to July, 1862; the Second Division, Third Corps, Army of Virginia, to September, 1862, being engaged in the battle of Cedar Mountain, Virginia, August 9, 1862; action of Rappahannock Station, Va., August 22-24, 1862; action of Thoroughfare Gap, August 28, 1862; Battle of Manassas, August 29-30, 1862; battle of Chantilly, September 1, 1862; battle of South Mountain, September 14, 1862; battle of Antietam, September, 1862, and skirmish of Shepherdstown, Va., September 19, 1862; on court-martial duty, March, 1864; in command of Third Division, Sixth Corps, Army of the Potomac, to October, 1864; engaged in the battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864; battles around Spottsylvania, May 9-21, 1864; skirmishes on North Anna, etc., May 1864; battles and actions of Cold Harbor, June 1-13, 1864; siege of Petersburg, June 18 to July 6, 1864; battle of Monocacy, July 9, 1864; skirmishes at Snicker's Gap, July 18, 1864; near Berryville, Va., August 21, 1864, and Smithfield, Va., August 29, 1864; battle of Opequan, September 19, 1864, and battle of Fisher's Hill, September 22, 1864; assumed command of the Sixth corps and was severely wounded during the battle of Cedar Creek, Virginia. Disabled by wounds until April 7, 1865, when he resumed command of the Third Division, Sixth Corps, and participated in the pursuit of the enemy, terminating in the capitulation of General Lee, at Appomattox Court-House. From June, 1865, to April, 1866, he was on court-martial duty, and on January 3, 1867, he was retired from active service with the rank of major-general, for disability from wounds received in battle.

He died September 22, 1887, from his wounds.

On the 2d February, 1862, General Winfield Scott, in a letter to the Secretary of War, says:

Captain Ricketts, it will be remembered, after displaying great efficiency at the battle of Bull Run, was badly wounded, captured, and taken to Richmond, where he was made to suffer the unmitigated rigor of imprisonment, which he could not have survived but for the heroic attention of his admirable wife.

So much distinction in battle, combined with so much consequent suffering, seems to me to be entitled to the special reward of the Government. Promotion to the staff, or, at least, a lieutenant-colonelcy by brevet, could not fail to give pleasure to all his marching and fighting brother officers.

It will thus be seen that General Ricketts spent in actual service more than twenty-seven years.

He was brevetted for gallant and meritorious services in battle five times.

He was severely wounded twice, and taken prisoner July 21, 1861, and held until January 5, 1862.

The testimony of distinguished officers is clear and conclusive that from the first battle of Bull Run, July, 1861, until the war ended Mrs. Frances Anne Pyne Ricketts devoted her fortune and best services to the country. Her services were untiring and valuable in caring for the sick and wounded during the war. On the battle-field, in the hospital, prison, and at home in her own house, which, a large share of the time, was filled with sick and wounded soldiers, she was found ministering to the relief of the unfortunate.

One distinguished officer says:

I was a wounded prisoner in the same hospital prison in Richmond in which General and Mrs. Ricketts were also confined as prisoners, he with severe wounds. And in one corner of a large ward, full to overflowing, this lady partitioned off a little space, just large enough to hold her cot, and in this immense hospital, filled with hun-

dreds of wounded, yielding many daily to death, this lady, a close prisoner with us all, made her daily rounds, administering to high and low impartially such aid and comfort as only the most heroic of women could render. Subsequently through the years of war that followed I visited from time to time wounded and dying comrades in Mrs. Ricketts's own home in Washington, and these had no other claim upon her, God knows, but that of the wonderful sympathy that seemed to fill this wonderful woman's heart.

This good woman, it seems, exhausted her strength and spent her own and her distinguished husband's fortune, not in the pursuit of pleasure and the enjoyment of luxury, but in caring for and ministering to the wants and necessities of wounded, suffering, and dying soldiers.

Mrs. Ricketts now resides in the city of New York. She is nearly destitute. On the small pension now received she and her two children manage, by beggarly economy, to keep body and soul together.

The board of directors of the Children's Hospital of the District of Columbia, and also of the Garfield Memorial Hospital of Washington, bear testimony to the earnest and self-denying labors of Mrs. Ricketts in the field of charity, and state that to her these institutions owe much of the prosperity which has attended their growth and the good they have done.

It is respectfully submitted that a lady who has done so much for others, under the circumstances above detailed, should not in her old age be permitted to suffer for want of the common comforts of life.

The majority of the committee therefore recommend that the bill do pass.