

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 5, 1891.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. DAVIS, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 4847.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill granting a pension to Elizabeth A. Custer, have examined the same and submit the following report, it being the same submitted to the House of Representatives on a similar bill:

[House Report No. 3328, Fifty-first Congress, second session.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 12242) granting a pension to Elizabeth A. Custer, submit the following report:

That the evidence on file in this case proves conclusively that the applicant is the widow of George A. Custer, who entered the service as a second lieutenant in 1861. He served with conspicuous gallantry throughout the war of the rebellion, and for eleven years after the end of this war, in the West, in all the Indian campaigns and wars during the years from 1865 to 1876, when he met his death, with his entire command.

For gallant and meritorious service during the war of the rebellion he was promoted through various grades, and March, 1865, he was brevetted a major general in the United States Army.

The records of the War Department furnish your committee with a soldier's history that has no comparison in this or any other day, and it is herewith submitted and made a part of this report:

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, December 17, 1890.

Statement of the military service of George A. Custer, late of the United States Army, compiled from the records of this office.

He was a cadet at the United States Military Academy from July 1, 1857, to June 24, 1861, when graduated and appointed.

Second lieutenant, Second Cavalry, June 24, 1861; Fifth Cavalry, August 3, 1861.

First lieutenant July 17, 1862.

Captain and additional aid-de-camp June 5, 1862, to March 31, 1863.

Brigadier-general of volunteers June 29, 1863.

Major-general of volunteers April 15, 1865.

Honorably mustered out of the volunteer service February 1, 1866.

Captain, Fifth Cavalry, May 8, 1864.

Lieutenant colonel Seventh Cavalry, July 28, 1866.

He received the brevets of major July 3, 1863, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Gettysburgh, Pa.;" of lieutenant colonel May 11, 1864, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Yellow Tavern, Virginia;" of colonel September 19, 1864, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Winchester, Va.;" of brigadier-general March 13, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Five Forks, Va.;" of major-general March 13, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious services during the campaign, ending in the surrender of the insurgent

army of Northern Virginia," and of major-general United States volunteers "for gallant and meritorious services at the battles of Winchester and Fisher's Hill, Va.," October 19, 1864.

He joined his regiment July 21, 1861, and served with it in the field, Virginia (participating in the battle of Bull Run, Virginia, July 21, 1861), to August 1, 1861, and in the defenses of Washington, D. C., to October 3, 1861; on sick leave to December 2, 1861; with his regiment in the defenses of Washington, D. C., to March 10, 1862, and in the Army of the Potomac, in the Virginia Peninsular campaign, to April 22, 1862; assistant engineer of General W. F. Smith's division, Army of the Potomac, to May 28, 1862; aide-de-camp to General McClellan to March 31, 1863; engaged in assisting General McClellan in the preparation of his report to April 13, 1863; with his regiment in the Army of the Potomac to June 6, 1863; aide de-camp to General Pleasanton, commanding the cavalry corps, Army of the Potomac, to June 29, 1863; in command of the Second Brigade, Third Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac, to April, 1864; the First Brigade, First Division, of that corps to September 30, 1864, and of the third cavalry division in the Middle Military Division to March, 1865, and in the cavalry operations before Richmond to May 29, 1865; in command of the cavalry division of the Military Division of the Southwest from June 3 to July 17, 1865; of the cavalry forces of the Department of Texas to August, 1865, and of the second cavalry division, Military Division of the Gulf, to November 13, 1865; chief of cavalry of the Department of Texas to February 1, 1866; on leave of absence to September 24, 1866; with regiment at Fort Riley, Kans., to March, 1867, and in the field in Kansas and Colorado to July 28, 1867; in command of his regiment in Kansas and the Indian Territory to November 10, 1869; on leave to January 9, 1870; with his regiment in Kansas to January 11, 1871; on leave of absence to September 3, 1871; member of a board to inspect cavalry horses and on detached service at headquarters Department of the South to May 22, 1872; with his regiment in command of the post of Elizabethtown, Ky., to February, 1873, and at Memphis, Tenn., to April, 1873; in command of a battalion of his regiment en route to and on the Yellowstone expedition, to September, 1873; in command of Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dak., to June 20, 1874; in command of the Black Hills expedition to August 30, 1874, and of Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dak., to October 2, 1874; on detached service at Chicago, Ill., to November 15, 1874; in command of his regiment and Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dak., to September 24, 1875; on leave of absence to February 15, 1876; on temporary duty at St. Paul, Minn., to March 12, 1876; commanding regiment at Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dak., to March 20, 1876; witness before a committee of the House of Representatives to May 11, 1876; commanding his regiment at Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dak., to May 16, 1876; in command of his regiment on an expedition against hostile Sioux Indians until he was killed in the battle of Little Big Horn River, Montana, June 25, 1876, and his whole command massacred.

J. C. KELTON,
Adjutant-General

In 1876 General Custer was ordered to participate in what is known as the "Little Big Horn expedition," and was killed on the Little Big Horn River, in Montana, June 25, 1876. The sad details of this unfortunate and terrible battle have never ceased to attract the attention of the civilized world, and while more than fourteen years have elapsed it is still fresh in the minds of the American people, and will continue an interesting subject so long as history is written.

His illustrious services are familiar to every citizen of the Republic, and each and all unhesitatingly join in this exalted estimate. No man gave his country greater measure of service in her hour of supreme peril, and few gave as great.

The universal wail of grief that swept the land from boundary to boundary upon the intelligence of his death but proves how great he was and how irreparable the loss.

History will record him as the best cavalry leader the world has ever produced.

He never ordered his men to go where he would not go himself.

MacKenzie, Crook, Miles, and Custer form a group of Indian fighters that have no comparison in history, and the rapid and wonderful development of the great West is due very largely to the intelligent work of these men and the gratitude of the nation is their due.

He shared with the private soldier the danger of the skirmish line oftener than any other officer of his rank. He captured the first flag from the Confederates that was captured by the Army of the Potomac, and he continued to capture flags until the last one was taken at Appomattox.

Your committee feel that it is not out of place to add to this report one clause in General Custer's congratulatory order to his soldiers on the surrender of the Confederate armies under General Lee, at Appomattox Court-House, April 9, 1865:

During the past six months, although in most instances confronted by superior numbers, you have captured from the enemy, in open battle, one hundred and eleven pieces of field artillery, sixty-five battle flags, and upwards of ten thousand prisoners of war, including seven general officers. Within the past ten days, and included in the above, you have captured forty-six pieces of field artillery and thirty-seven battle flags.

General Sheridan said to Custer at Fort Leavenworth in 1869, "Custer, you are the only man that never failed me."

General Terry paid him equally high compliments for his faithful and intelligent services.

It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that Custer and Custer's friends were the flower of the cavalry service.

While Custer was in chief command he never made a mistake. When he met disaster it was always due to the blunders of his superior officers.

He died surrounded by foes in battle amid the men he loved and who fell with him.

On the day that Custer fell there also fell, fighting as he fought and dying as he died, his brother, Col. Tom Custer, the double of the general, who had won fame on many battle fields, and who wore upon his breast medals of honor voted him by Congress for gallant deeds; and near by lay his other brother, Barton Custer, a hero, and also his young nephew, Reed, and also that brilliant Lieutenant Calhoun, the husband of Custer's only sister, who died like the Custers, with his face to the sky, and his feet to the foe. The death that Custer met with his little band of heroes was worth the lives of all the general officers of the world. He died like a hero, and the American people will remember him and the unprotected ones he left.

By the death of General Custer and his brothers no protector but an aged father was left to care for the widows and orphans or the family.

The father and the widows of these heroes were left without any means of support other than their daily labor. For years the subject of this report maintained herself by her daily labor, and her untiring efforts in the interests of the widows and orphans of her husband's comrades during her own poverty is a monument to the glory and independence of American woman.

General Custer commenced life as a poor boy, with but his own head and hands as capital. It was a struggle to gain bread, let alone education, but he gained admission to the West Point Academy by his own merit. He graduated just at the time when his services to his country were needed. At once he placed himself at the front, and from the early days of 1861 to the fatal day in 1876 he was in the most active service.

It is unnecessary for your committee to recount his services. It is enough to say that by reason of this active, unceasing service he could not accumulate and did not have wealth of any kind other than the name he had won in the interests of the American people. He believed they would tenderly care for his widow, and your committee fully believe the American people will applaud this act that is at this late

date to place her beyond want. It is unnecessary to cite the many precedents for this action. The sum called for in the bill is a modest one, and your committee, aware that the press, the survivors of the war for the Union, and the people throughout the country are in close sympathy with it, most earnestly recommend the passage of the bill.

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