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Frances Anne Pyne Ricketts

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FRANCES ANNE PYNE RICKETTS.

FEBRUARY 28, 1888.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 393.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 393) for the relief of Frances Anne Pyne Ricketts, having considered the same, respectfully report:

From an examination of the papers in this case they believe the facts stated in the report of the Senate Committee on Pensions show that the case of Mrs. Ricketts is one eminently meritorious, and that in view of the eminent services rendered by her husband, and of her own self-sacrificing devotion in the care of the sick and wounded soldiers in prison, in hospital, and at her own house, and of her present impoverished condition, the committee would adopt the report of the Senate Committee on Pensions as their own, and would recommend the passage of the Senate bill with an amendment striking out the words "one hundred," in the seventh and eighth lines thereof, and inserting the words "seventy-five" in the place thereof.

[Senate Report No. 265, Fiftieth Congress, first session.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 393) for the relief of Frances Anne Pyne Ricketts, have examined the same, and report—

First. The military record of General Ricketts.

Second. The testimonials of distinguished officers of the Army and Navy and managers of charitable institutions, not merely to General Ricketts's gallant services in the field during three wars, but to the gentler heroism of his wife in hospital, camp, and home.

These follow in their order:

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, December 6, 1887.

Statement of the military services of James B. Ricketts, late of the U. S. Army, compiled from the records of this office.

He was a cadet at the U. S. Military Academy from September 1, 1835, to July 1, 1839, when graduated and appointed second lieutenant First Artillery; was promoted first lieutenant April 21, 1846; captain August 3, 1852; and major First Artillery June 1, 1863. He was retired with the rank of major-general January 3, 1867.

He was brevetted 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 a brigadier-general of volunteers July 21, 1861, and honorably mustered out as such April 20, 1866.

He was 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 joined his company at Plattsburgh Barracks, N. Y., October 1, 1839, and continued on duty with it in the Middle and Eastern States to October, 1845, in Texas to May, 1846, and in the war with Mexico, being engaged in the battle of Monterey, September 21, 23, 1846, holding of the Rinconada Pass February 22, 23, 1847, during the battle of Buena Vista, and at the capture of the city of Mexico, in August, 1847.

He left Mexico with his company and served at Fort Columbus, New York Harbor (regimental quartermaster June 15, 1849, to August 3, 1852), to November, 1860, at New Orleans, La., to March, 1852, in Florida hostilities against the Seminole Indians to October, 1852, and in Louisiana to November, 1853; on recruiting service to November, 1854; with his company in Texas to October, 1858; in Louisiana to December, 1858; in Texas to 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; and in the Manassas campaign in July, 1861, being engaged in the battle of Bull Run July 21, 1861, where he was severely wounded and captured by the enemy, and held as a prisoner of war until January 5, 1862, when he was paroled, and in February, 1862, discharged. From May to June 19, 1862, he commanded the First Brigade, First Division, Department of the Rappahannock; the Second Division of that department to July, 1862; the Second Division, Third Corps, Army of Virginia, to September, 1862; and the Second Division, First Corps, Army of the Potomac, to November 2, 1862, being engaged in the battle of Cedar Mountain, Va., August 9, 1862; action of Rappahannock Station, Va., August 22, 24, 1862; action of Thoroughfare Gap, August 28, 1862; battle of Manassas, August 29 to 30, 1862; battle of Chantilly, September 1, 1862; battle of South Mountain, September 14, 1862; battle of Antietam, September, 1862; and skirmish of Shepardstown, Va., September 19, 1862. He was on court-martial duty to March, 1864; in command of the Third Division, Sixth Corps, Army of the Potomac, to October, 1864, being engaged in the battle of the Wilderness, May 5, 6, 1864; battles around Spotsylvania, 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. During the battle of Cedar Creek, Va., and the morning of October 19, 1864, he assumed command of the Sixth Corps and was severely wounded while exercising that command. He was disabled by his wounds until April 7, 1865, when he resumed command of the Third Division, Sixth Corps, and participated in the pursuit of the rebel army, 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. The following is a copy of a testimonial letter on file in this office:

NEW YORK, *February 2, 1862.*

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

SIR: I beg to present a case to you which, with deference, I think, worthy of consideration.

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

I have the honor to remain, with high respect, your most obedient servant,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

Respectfully,

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY,
Washington, D. C., November 30, 1887.

DEAR SIR: The application for pension of the widow of General Ricketts will soon be presented to your committee. The distinguished services of General Ricketts in the past forty-five years, from the war with Mexico to the end of the late war, his desperate wounds at Bull Run and Cedar Creek, his confinement and sufferings in Richmond prison, are well known, and are enough to secure attention to the claim of his family for proper provision by the Government. And Mrs. Ricketts herself has the best right to the interest of your committee on account of her noble services in the care of the sick and wounded in the war in Richmond and in Washington. My first acquaintance with her was at the bedside of the gallant Kirby, whom she took to her house in this city after his fatal wound at Fredericksburgh and nursed him with a sister's care till his death.

Since the war she has been constant in her kindness to the veteran and disabled soldiers and their widows and children, securing friends and pensions and employment for them; and she has been foremost in every charity and in this city's hospital work until this day. She has been obliged to remove her son from college in the middle of his course and go to New York to seek employment. I join with her friends in the Army in commending her claim to the most generous consideration of your committee.

Very respectfully, yours,

F. M. GUNNELL,
Surgeon-General, U. S. Navy.

Honorable CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE OF PENSIONS, U. S. SENATE.

The Hon. Committee on Pensions, United States Senate:

The undersigned respectfully represents that on the 21st of July, 1861, he was wounded and captured at the first battle of Bull Run, and lay at the same hospital at the Lewis House, on the field of battle, with General (then Capt.) James B. Ricketts, also wounded.

That a day or two after the battle Mrs. Ricketts came from Washington to see her husband, and continued with him until he was exchanged several months afterwards, undergoing great hardships and privations, and yet doing a large amount of good among the wounded Union officers and soldiers at the hospitals within the enemy's lines, while nursing her husband.

While we were confined in the poor-house hospital at Richmond Mrs. Ricketts was obliged for many weeks to sleep in the same room with her husband, myself, and other wounded prisoners, separated from us only by her blanket shawl hung up in a corner. And she shared with us the meager fare allotted to the wounded prisoners, except what she was able to purchase from her own purse, which she also freely exhausted on her fellow-captives.

That Mrs. Ricketts used a hired carriage and team of horses to reach her husband and the carriage and horses were confiscated or otherwise appropriated by the Confederate generals at Manassas, to her great distress, inasmuch as she was holden for the same, and had to pay for them afterwards herself, to the amount of several hundred dollars. The undersigned partly knows, from his own knowledge and partly from others, that Mrs. Ricketts continued, after her husband's exchange, throughout the war, to devote her time and actual labor and means to look after, care for, nurse, attend, help, and to secure means and assistance from others to provide for the sick and wounded officers and men of our armies, not only at Washington, where she lived, but on several occasions notably visiting the field for the same object, to the great relief and comfort of many, and to the saving of some lives.

And that she freely gave up her own home, or rooms in the same, for the purpose, having at different times as many as fourteen wounded soldiers in her said house.

That for these sacrifices, privations, and labors Mrs. Ricketts never asked for and never received a cent of compensation.

That her husband rendered great and valuable services to the country as lieutenant in the Mexican and Florida wars, and as battery, brigade, and division commander of volunteers in the late war, and that he was badly wounded and finally died from the effects of his wound, leaving his widow, the aforesaid Mrs. Ricketts, without income, save the small pension to which she is entitled by law for his services.

And whereas the widows of other generals have received increased pensions or other sums for their husbands' services, Mrs. Ricketts's friends consider that still more is she fairly entitled to be remembered, both for her husband's eminent and valuable services and for her own, which have been of value to others beyond computation.

Wherefore, for these reasons and for other reasons which will be duly submitted by persons knowing to other circumstances, I respectfully but earnestly recommend that

Mrs. Ricketts be allowed \$100 a month for life. Less than that would hardly be sufficient for her actual condition of age, health, and circumstances.

Very respectfully submitted.

O. B. WILLCOX,
Brigadier-General, U. S. Army, retired, Brevet Major-General.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 2, 1887.

SIR: I understand an effort is to be made to induce the present Congress to increase the very limited pension allowed under existing laws to Mrs. Ricketts, widow of the late Major-General Ricketts, to an extent somewhat commensurate with the services and sufferings of her late husband, and with her own untiring and valuable services in caring for the sick and wounded during the late war.

It is thought some special recognition is due for the long and distinguished services of General Ricketts during the Florida and Mexican wars and in the late war, during which he held important commands, in the exercise of which he received the wounds from which he eventually died, after years of uncomplaining suffering and distress.

It would seem, too, that Mrs. Ricketts's personal devotion to the care of the sick and wounded, to whom she consecrated herself most of the time during the war, deserves recognition as well.

Her house during that time was virtually a hospital, filled with sick and wounded officers, many of whose lives were saved by her devotion and care, and some were comforted even in death by her kindly ministrations.

Poor Kirby died there. Upton, Smedberg, myself, and many others whose names I can not now recall, were made as comfortable and as happy as was possible under the circumstances, under her hospitable roof, and by her untiring care and devotion to their needs.

When wounded myself at Cedar Mountain, I was sent at night to Culpeper, and the next morning found Mrs. Ricketts at my bedside. She not only did all that was possible for me, writing to my family, procuring food that I could eat, but she ministered to the extent of her ability and means to the other wounded. She sent me to her house in Washington, where I remained until sent to my own home.

No sufferer ever came within her reach without receiving all the care and attention she was able to give.

Since the war she has been an active participant in every benevolent enterprise in Washington, and has given of her personal attention, all she could spare from her care of her suffering husband, to the hospitals and to looking after and helping the poor and distressed, to whom she has given generously of her means.

By the death of her distinguished husband, to whom she has devoted years of personal care and attention, she is left almost destitute. She has been obliged to take her only son from college.

It is devoutly hoped that Congress may see its way to largely increasing the meager pension of this brave woman, who has done so much to relieve and comfort the distresses of so many helpless persons.

It is unnecessary for me to say anything of the services of General Ricketts. They are matters of record, and can be seen by all to whom they are not already known.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. C. AUGUR,
Brig. Genl., U. S. Army (retired).

The CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON PENSIONS,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

COHASSETT, MASS., December 5, 1887.

DEAR SIR: It gives me great pleasure to learn that Mrs. Ricketts's friends, and especially those wounded officers still living who received her kindly aid when most needed, are uniting in an appeal to the Senate Committee on Pensions for a special act granting her \$100 per month for her untiring devotion to the sick and disabled during the late war, and I am desirous to add my voice to that appeal, and to express my high appreciation of her invaluable services so freely rendered to others as well as to myself. She was almost the first person by my side when I reached Washington September 2, 1862, very seriously hurt, and during my long prostration her attentions, always cheerful and inspiring, were as frequent as her duties with others would permit. I knew of her unremitting ministrations to several wounded officers among my own acquaintances at that time, and in fact heard of her constant attentions to the suffering in all parts of the city of Washington, to whom her visits were most welcome and encouraging. Her kindly nature, cheery temperament, with a willingness and strength to do which never yielded to fatigue, eminently fitted her for those services of charity which she so readily assumed. Her devotion to the wounded in Libby

Prison, procuring for them necessities otherwise beyond their reach and extending to them sympathies and attentions which the long suffering alone know how to appreciate, I trust will be remembered now to her credit and receive from the nation their merited recompense.

My acquaintance with General Ricketts commenced fifty years ago, when we were cadets at the United States Military Academy. As a brigadier of volunteers I commanded a brigade of his division during the summer of 1862, and most willingly now bear testimony to his high character and soldierly qualities. At this time and in this connection a brief reference to his military record can not be out of place. He served with distinction in General McDowell's campaign in 1861, was severely wounded, captured, and consigned to Libby Prison, Richmond. Recovering his liberty and eventually his health, he returned to duty in the spring of 1862, and served as a brigadier-general in command of a division at Cedar Mountain, Thoroughfare Gap, Second Bull Run, and Antietam, and again in the campaign of 1864 until utterly incapacitated by his wound, received while commanding the Sixth Corps at Cedar Creek. General Ricketts was distinguished for that highest quality of courage that sinks all sense of fear in the obligation of duty. Always foremost in the fight to encourage his command by his presence, he was twice severely wounded, and made a suffering invalid for the remainder of his life.

I sincerely hope that his distinguished services, with Mrs. Ricketts's devotion to the sick and wounded, will secure her that aid from Congress asked by her friends.

Very respectfully submitted.

L. B. TOWER,

*Colonel of Engineers (retired), and Brevet Major-General, U. S. Army.
The Chairman of the Committee on Pensions,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.*

FORT SPOKANE, WASH., December 5, 1887.

GENTLEMEN: Understanding that Mrs. Fanny Ricketts will appeal to Congress for an increase of pension, I earnestly desire to add my own appeal in her behalf, based not only upon the fact that it should be due to her as the widow of an officer who was brave and gallant to a fault, for General James B. Ricketts was all that, and served his country in an exalted position and with unquestionable zeal, save in its magnitude, which I know of my own knowledge, as I was the inspector-general of the Sixth Army Corps, in which General Ricketts served as division commander. I consider it her due, not only as the widow of such a man, but because of her own service in the care of the wounded on the battle-field of the first Bull Run, in the hospital prison in Richmond, Va., and in her own house, which was more or less filled with wounded officers all through the war. This I can testify most heartily; and a nobler woman in the discharge of her self-imposed duty to her country I can not imagine. 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 hundreds of wounded, yielding many daily to death, this one 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. In all the lapse of years that have gone by since the events alluded to, and in which I have scarcely seen Mrs. Ricketts, I have never lost sight of the great service she thus rendered, and never thought of it all that I was not lost in admiration and reverence for one who, in my estimation, was a heroine and deserving as such for her disinterested services in her country's cause.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. FORD KENT,

Major Fourth Infantry, U. S. Army,

The honorable Committee on Pensions, United States Senate.

NO. 11 EAST TWENTY-SECOND STREET,
New York, December 12, 1887.

GENTLEMEN: Having heard that Mrs. General Ricketts is an applicant for an increase of pension, I desire to add my testimony to her loyalty and devotion to the cause for which her noble husband so gallantly fought, and to which he gave his life.

In 1861 it was my misfortune to be severely wounded in the battle of First Bull Run, and there to be made a prisoner of war; and while in the prison hospital at Richmond, Va., Mrs. Ricketts was, by her devotion, care, and attention to the wounded and sick Union prisoners, the only ray of sunshine they had in that miserable prison.

She did all that any woman could do, and to her care and careful nursing many of the prisoners owe their life. Having personally shared in her kind attentions while a prisoner of war, and having witnessed her untiring ministrations to hundreds of other unfortunate prisoners, I can not resist the impulse to add my appeal to your honorable committee in her behalf, being influenced to do so by my gratitude to her, as well as by my sense of justice.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. H. MERRELL,
Captain, U. S. Army (Retired).

The honorable Committee on Pensions, United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 6, 1887.

The Committee on Pensions, United States Senate :

GENTLEMEN: We, the undersigned, directors of the Children's Hospital of the District of Columbia, learn with sympathy and regret of the dependent condition of Mrs. General Ricketts, for so many years the president of the board of lady visitors of this hospital. Her connection with it began in 1873, only one year after its foundation. During all these years she has devoted her time, energy, and means to its service, and in aid of other charitable institutions and causes. To her we owe much of the prosperity which has attended the growth of this hospital and the good that it has done. That she, who has done so much for others, should be herself in need seems doubly unnatural and unjust. We cordially unite in urging that the pension granted her be increased to \$100 per month, in view both of the distinguished military services of her deceased husband and of the devotion of the best years of her own life to works of charity for others.

ANTHONY POLLOK,
D. R. HAGNER, M. D.,
J. W. H. LOVEJOY,
S. H. KAUFFMANN,
THOS. J. FISHER,
W. S. THOMPSON,
F. B. MCGUIRE,
EDW. TEMPLE,
H. S. LINCOLN,

SAM. J. DAVIS,
R. ROSS PERRY,
REGINALD FENDALL,
BLAIR LEE,
M. W. GALT,
ROBERT C. FOX,
ALEX. Y. P. GARNETT,
W. W. JOHNSTON.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 6, 1887.

To the Committee on Pensions, United States Senate :

GENTLEMEN: We, the undersigned, members of the board of directors of the Garfield Memorial Hospital, understanding that friends of Mrs. General Ricketts are presenting her claims for an increase of her pension from \$30 to \$100 a month, beg leave to bear our testimony to her earnest and self-denying labors in that field of charity where, as her coadjutors, we witnessed so many acts of generous sympathy on her part. From the organization of this hospital Mrs. Ricketts, as a member of the board of directors and as one of the executive committee, was ever indefatigable in her devotion to the welfare of the afflicted; and we express the hope that her own brave and charitable labors may receive that consideration in her own interest which the needs of others ever received at her hands.

We therefore respectfully and earnestly urge upon your committee a favorable hearing of her application for an increase of pension.

SAM. F. MILLER,
President.
H. W. WILLARD,
Vice-President.

A. W. FLEMING.
J. ORMOND WILSON.
REGINALD FENDALL.
B. G. LOVEJOY.
E. FRANCIS RIGGS.
J. W. THOMPSON.
JOS. K. MCCAMMON.
JNO. A. BAKER.
W. A. LEONARD
JOHN S. BILLINGS.

To the foregoing testimonials to the courage and high manliness of General Ricketts and to the equal courage and rare womanliness of his devoted wife, the committee can add nothing further than to express their profound conviction that the Congress, in recognizing and rewarding conspicuous examples of valor and virtue, devote the nation's bounty to its highest and most sacred use; and that with such convictions, and in accord with the sentiments expressed in the testimonials above given, the committee report favorably on the bill under consideration, and earnestly recommend its passage.

