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Gray's Battalion of Arkansas Volunteers.

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GRAY'S BATTALION OF ARKANSAS VOLUNTEERS.

AUGUST 21, 1894.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. CLARK, of Missouri, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 8018.]

The Committee on Pensions has had under consideration several bills having for their object the admission of several new classes to the benefits of the laws granting pensions on account of Mexican war service, but, with the exception of Gray's Battalion of Arkansas Volunteers, none of them have presented reasons sufficient to commend them to the judgment of the committee as being entitled to any special recognition in the pension laws of the United States at this time.

In the case of Gray's Battalion, the facts and circumstances are such, in the judgment of your committee, as to justify favorable action, and a bill for the relief of the soldiers of that battalion and their widows is reported herewith, with the recommendation that it do pass.

Gray's Battalion of Arkansas Volunteers was, as shown by a report from the War Department, mustered into service from July 1 to 27, 1846, at Fort Smith, Ark., to serve twelve months.

The battalion consisted of 425 officers and men, forming the field and staff and five companies.

The field and staff, and companies A, B, and C, remained at Fort Smith, Ark., until August 3, 1846, when they left for Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation, where they remained until mustered out. Company E left Fort Smith, Ark., August 2, 1846, and arrived at Fort Wayne, Beatie Prairie, Cherokee Nation, August 7, 1846, where it remained until mustered out. Company D remained on duty at Fort Smith during the entire period of service. A part of the battalion was mustered out February 28, 1847, a part April 15, 1847, and the balance April 20, 1847.

The service of these men was of an important character, they having rendered it practicable to withdraw, for service in Mexico, the regular troops who had been guarding the frontier and protecting the settlers from the ravages of restless and hostile Indians.

After the passage of the act of January 29, 1887, granting pensions for Mexican-war service, many of the survivors of this battalion and the widows of those who have died made application under the act, and it was not until recently and after nearly all of the applicants had been regularly placed upon the pension roll that any question was raised as to their title.

The following correspondence shows the course pursued by the Pension Bureau with reference to these claimants, and also indicates that the number of persons likely to be benefited by the passage of the act is

very small, as most of the survivors and widows are already pensioned under former rulings of the Department:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UNITED STATES,
Washington, D. C., August 1, 1894.

DEAR SIR: I was some months since informed by you that under Gen. Black's construction of the act of Congress of January 29, 1889, providing for pensioning soldiers of the Mexican war, some of the members of Lieut. Col. Gray's battalion of Arkansas Volunteers, 1846 and 1847, were on the pension list, but that under your construction of the act these soldiers are not within its provisions.

I have an amendment to offer to H. R. 7414, now pending, to include these soldiers and their widows.

Will you kindly furnish me (if it can be done) by Friday, 3 p. m., a statement showing number of these men now on pension roll and number of rejected applications on file.

Very respectfully,

ROBERT NEILL.

Hon. WILLIAM LOCHREN,
Commissioner of Pensions.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF PENSIONS,
Washington, D. C., August 2, 1894.

SIR: In compliance with the request contained in your communication of yesterday, I have the honor to advise you that I have caused a careful examination of the Mexican war pension records (act of January 29, 1887) to be made, and it appears that 58 claims have been filed under this act by soldiers who alleged service in Gray's Battalion, Arkansas Volunteers. Of this number, 52 claims have been admitted and 6 rejected. Twenty-five claims have been filed by the widows of such soldiers and of this number 10 have been admitted, 13 rejected, and there are 2 claims now pending.

RECAPITULATION.

Soldiers' claims filed.....	58
Widows' claims filed.....	25
Total.....	83
Soldiers' claims admitted.....	52
Widows' claims admitted.....	10
Total.....	62
Soldiers' claims rejected.....	6
Widows' claims rejected.....	13
Widows' claims pending.....	2
Total.....	21

Very respectfully,

WM. LOCHREN,
Commissioner.

Hon. ROBERT NEILL,
House of Representatives.

There is a precedent for the proposed legislation in the act of Congress granting pensions to Powell's Battalion of Missouri Volunteers (Mexican war), approved March 3, 1891.