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Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac

A Critical History of Operations in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania from the Commencement to the Close of the War, 1861–1865.

By WILLIAM SWINTON.

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CUTTING LEE'S COMMUNICATIONS.

Extending the Left Flank of the Army of the Potomac Across the Railroads Entering Petersburg From the South—Futile Operations on the North Side—Close of the Campaign.

Having already set forth the bounds within which manuvers were practicable for the army before Petersburg, it remains to describe a series of operations within these limits, executed during the remaining months of Summer and Autumn. They present a remarkable illustration of the vigor and skill that marked both the attack and defense of that city. The recital will bring this narrative up to the close of the campaign of 1864.

THE MOVEMENT TO DEEP BOTTOM.

The first of these operations was a repetition of the manuvers to the north bank of the James River. The expedition was again under the command of Gen. Hancock, to whom were given, in addition to his own corps, the Tenth Corps (now under Gen. Birney) and the Cavalry Division of Gen. Gregg. The movement was begun on the 12th of August. As it was not possible long to conceal its real character, it was resolved to throw the enemy off the scent by the embarkation of the expeditionary force on transports at City Point, and the promulgation of the idea that it was about to start for Washington. During the night of the 12th, the fleet steamed up stream, and the troops were next morning landed at Deep Bottom, where Gen. Foster continued to hold an intrenched camp.(1) Much difficulty was experienced in the debarkation, which was not completed until 9 o'clock of the morning of the 13th—a tardiness not auspicious of a successful result.(16)

Hancock moved out by the New Market and Malvern Hill roads, encountering little opposition until reaching Bailey's Creek, the point at which his previous advance had been arrested. Here Mott's Division fronted the enemy's intrenched line, while Barlow, with two divisions, numbering nearly 10,000 men, was sent to assault on the right, with instructions that, when the position was carried, he should move to his left and uncover Mott's front, when the whole line would advance. The duty assigned to Barlow was of the nature of a detached operation, but he unfortunately tried to keep up his connection with Mott's right, which strung his force out in a thin line, and left him nothing wherewith to form a storming column. Late in the day he made, with a single brigade, an attack that was rather feebly executed,(17) so that night found the Confederates still in possession of the intrenched line. On Gen. Birney's front, on the other side of Bailey's Creek, some success was gained for the enemy, having weakened that part of the line to oppose Barlow, Gen. Birney was able, with slight loss to break through a portion of the hostile front, and captured four guns.

REBEL POSITIONS LOST AND RECOVERED.

Whatever prospect of success originally attended this operation had been based on the fact that the Confederates were weak on the north side of the James—the whole force being believed to be not above 8,000 men.(18) But the design being now fully disclosed, Lee rapidly reinforced to meet this menace, and success was already very problematical. New dispositions were, however, made on the 14th. On the following day Gen. Birney was directed to find the enemy's left flank and turn it, Gregg's cavalry covering the movement on the right; but he did not conduct his operations sufficiently to the left, and nothing was accomplished that day. On the morning of the 16th, Birney(19) made a direct attack, with the division of Terry, and succeeded in carrying the line, capturing three colors and 200 or 300 prisoners; but the enemy soon rallied and recovered the position.

In connection with Birney's operation, Gregg's mounted division and an infantry brigade under Gen. Miles were sent to operate on the Charles City road. Gregg's advance was spirited, and he succeeded in driving the enemy before him for a considerable distance—the Confederate Gen. Chambliss being killed in the skirmish. Fresh forces during the afternoon assailed Gregg, however, who retired, fighting, to Deep Creek, across which he was afterward driven. In Birney's front the enemy showed so strong a force that a renewal of the attack was deemed impracticable.

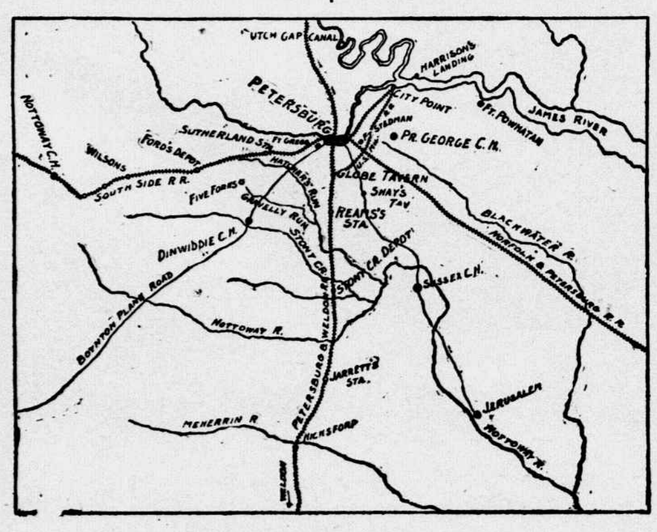
During the night of the 16th a fleet of steamers was sent from City Point to Deep Bottom, returning at 4 a. m. on the following morning—the object being to convey the impression to the enemy that the expeditionary force was withdrawing, and induce him to come out of his works and attack. This ruse was not successful.

The four succeeding days passed in unimportant reconnoissances, though on the afternoon of the 18th the Confederates made a sally against a part of Birney's line. After a fight of 35 minutes they were repulsed, with considerable loss. Gen. Miles, with two brigades, participated, attacking the enemy on his left flank. At dark of the 20th, Hancock returned, by way of Bermuda Hundred, to his old camp before Petersburg. The Union loss in this operation exceeded 1,500 men.(20) Much had been expected from it, but the results were trivial.

TO THE WELDON RAILROAD.

If the movement to the north side of the James had failed to accomplish the object contemplated, it had at least compelled Lee to detach a considerable force from the lines of Petersburg. Advantage was, accordingly, taken of this fact to strike out on the left flank, which now rested within three miles of the Weldon Railroad. This, as one of the chief lines of communication for the Confederate army, presented a tempting prize.

This operation was intrusted to Gen. Warren, who began its execution on the morning of the 18th, while Hancock remained yet on the north side of the James. No more than slight opposition was encountered on the march, and early in the forenoon Warren established himself on the railroad. Leaving Griffin's Division to guard the point seized and observe the avenues of approach from the south and west, the advance was continued northward along the railroad. After proceeding a mile toward Petersburg, the enemy was found in line of battle, showing a firm disposition to contest further progress.(21) In the afternoon, when Warren attempted to renew his advance, with Crawford's Division on the right and Ayres' on the left, the Confederates took the offensive against the latter.



ACTION ON THE WELDON RAILROAD.

The attack of the enemy came from the left, from the Vaughan road, the location of which at that point was unknown to the Union officers. It first fell upon the Maryland Brigade, which was marching by the flank to cover Ayres's left. The result was that in a few minutes this brigade gave way, thus compelling Ayres's left to fall back, and stopping the advance on the right. About 200 of the Marylanders were taken prisoners: the remainder retired under cover of the 15th N. Y. H. A., which, standing firmly, poured rapid volleys into the enemy, driving him speedily back. This action cost a loss of 1,000 men, killed, wounded and prisoners. But it still left Warren in possession of the prize—the Weldon Railroad. Here he immediately began intrenching a position.

The possession of this line was not to Lee a matter of vital importance, but still of very great importance.(22) He, therefore—but I couldn't. I was headed t' fore, determined at all hazards to dislodge the intruding force.

BAD RESULTS FROM BRAGG'S ERROR.

The body of Confederates met by Warren had not exceeded a division; but Lee immediately strengthened it by powerful reinforcements, and on the following afternoon (the 19th), made a sudden irruption on the right flank of the Union position. Gen. Warren had directed Brig.-Gen. Bragg to establish, by means of his brigade, a connection of skirmishers on the shortest line between the right of his corps and the left of the army, then resting across the Jerusalem plank road. This order Gen. Bragg did not execute, but took up another line a mile or more to the rear.(23) On learning this error, Gen. Warren instructed the Brigadier to correct it; but before this could be done the enemy broke through this picket-line with heavy fire in column of fours, left in front. Warren's flank was now turned, and the Confederates, in rear of Crawford's line, swept rapidly down to Warren's left. Great confusion was produced by the men on the front line hastily retiring and masking the fire of those on the second line; so that the whole of Crawford's Division was compelled to fall back, as was also the right of Ayres's. Twenty-five hundred prisoners fell into the hands of the enemy, and among them Gen. J. Hays, one of Warren's Brigade commanders. The troops, however, still clung to their vantage-ground on the railroad.

In the midst of the action, the commands of Wilcox and White of the Ninth Corps (about 2,000 in all), opportunely came up; whereupon, Warren, his own lines being reformed, pushed forward and regained the ground lost. The enemy, in great confusion, rapidly fell back to his intrenchments, after a success which, though brilliant in itself, totally failed to accomplish the designed object.

WARREN SECURED HIS HOLD.

Being satisfied that the position which he held was one that the enemy would make renewed efforts to regain, Warren made dispositions of his lines favorable for artillery defense, and then awaited attack. He was not mistaken in this anticipation; for, on the morning of the 21st, the Confederates opened with some 30 pieces of artillery, crossing their fire at right angles over Warren's position. After an hour's practice of this nature they advanced to attack in front, and at the same time endeavored, with a turning force, to reach the left flank. The attack in front was, however, easily repulsed, and Warren having previously disposed his left flank en echelon, the turning force suddenly met a severe fire, under which it fell back in great disorder—500 being taken prisoners.(24) The day's work was a clear victory, achieved with trivial loss.(25.) Warren soon rendered his position unassailable, and Lee was compelled to see this important line of supplies cut off. The loss sustained by Warren in these actions for the possession of the Weldon Railroad reached an aggregate of 4,455 killed, wounded and missing.(26)

THE ACTION AT REAM'S STATION.

It will be remembered that at the time Warren moved out, Hancock was operating on the north bank of the James River. Having, meanwhile, returned to the lines before Petersburg on the morning of the 21st, after a very fatiguing march, he was ordered to the left, in rear of the position held by Warren. This was accomplished the same afternoon, and the troops passed the next two days in destroying the Weldon Railroad, moving southward and tearing up the track as far as Ream's Station. The cavalry meanwhile operated on the left toward Dinwiddie Courthouse. From Ream's Station the troops proceeded, on the 24th, to continue the work of destruction for three miles further southward, after which they were withdrawn to the intrenchments. As Hancock's instructions were to break up the railroad as far as Rowanty Creek, eight miles south of Ream's, he once more dispatched part of his corps, on the 25th, to perform this duty. The division to which this work was this day assigned (that of Gibbon), had, however, hardly left its intrenchments when the cavalry, which was thrown out in the direction of any hostile approach, reported the enemy advancing. As the Confederates showed a strong force of cavalry and infantry, Hancock withdrew Gibbon's Division within the intrenchments at Ream's Station, placing it on the left of the First Division, at this time under the command of Gen. Miles. These two small divisions numbered but 6,000 men.

The first Confederate attack was made at 2 p. m. in heavy force, and fell upon Miles's Division on the right. This was speedily repulsed. A second and more vigorous assault followed at a brief interval and was likewise repulsed, some of the enemy falling within a few yards of the intrenchments. It should be here observed that the line of breastworks at Ream's Station had been constructed by another corps some time before, and was very faultily located—a fact that made the defense difficult, and materially contributed to the disaster that now befell Hancock.

DISASTER FOR HANCOCK.

The repulse of the enemy in the previous charges had been so severe and attended with so heavy a loss that there was hesitation in renewing the assault. Gen. A. P. Hill, who commanded the Confederate corps on the ground, was, however, resolved to carry the position, and he ordered the division of Heath to do so at all hazards. To cover this attack the Confederates concentrated a powerful artillery fire on the position, and, from the faulty location of the breastwork, it took Hancock's line in reverse, considerably demoralizing the troops. The bombardment was promptly followed by the advance of a storming column, which, by an impetuous rush, succeeded in breaking through Miles's line. Most of the command gave way in confusion, and it was found impossible to repair the break, for the only reserve present was a brigade of Gibbon's Division under Col. Rugg, and this could neither be made to go forward nor to fire.(27) The Confederates then sprang upon the artillery, and the batteries of McKnight, Perrin, and Sleeper had to be surrendered, after being brilliantly served.

On the occurrence of this disaster Gen. Hancock ordered forward the division of Gibbon to retake the position and guns. The order was responded to very feebly by the troops, who fell back to their breastwork after receiving a slight fire. By the loss of this part of the line the remainder of Gibbon's Division was exposed to an attack in flank and rear, so that the troops were compelled to occupy the reverse side of the line of intrenchments. The outlook was certainly very critical, and but for the obstinate bravery of Miles's Division and the fine behavior of that officer himself it had been very ill for the Union force. Miles, however, succeeded in rallying a portion of the 61st N. Y., and forming it at right angles to the breastwork, arrested the progress of the Confederates, retook McKnight's guns, and recovered a considerable part of the lost line. The behavior of most of the other troops was despicable.

The enemy's dismounted cavalry now made an attack against the left. Though not executed with much vigor, it was resisted with still less by Gibbon's Division, which was driven from its breastworks. The Confederates, elated at their easy success, pressed on with loud cheers, when they were met by a heavy flank fire from the dismounted Union cavalry, that, occupying the extreme left, behaved in a manner that contrasted more than favorably with the conduct of most of the infantry. This summarily checked their advance. When, however, the troopers found themselves a second time assailed, and now by infantry, they were unable to maintain their position, and were, therefore, retired to a new line in the rear, where the troops had been rallied.

BOTH ARMIES GAVE UP THE FIELD.

It is wonderful, and indeed incomprehensible, that the Commanding General, informed as he was of Hancock's situation, should not have taken prompt measures for his relief. The distance from Ream's Station to Warren's position was but four miles by a broad, open road, with a telegraph line between the two. Yet the reenforcements forwarded to Hancock—to wit, Mott's Division of his own corps and Wilcox's Division of the Ninth Corps—were ordered to take up their march by the plankroad, the distance by which was above double that of the direct and open route along the railroad. Several circumstances occurred to add additional delay to the arrival of these troops; but it is certain that in any event they would not have reached Hancock in time to be of service.(28)

Thus affairs stood when night fell, and Hancock then withdrew from Ream's Station. It afterwards proved that the Confederates abandoned the field about the same hour. Hancock's loss in this action was 2,400 killed, wounded, and missing, out of his small command of 8,000 infantry and cavalry. Of this number 1,700 were prisoners. The loss on the part of the Confederates is known to have been also very severe, but the precise number is unknown.(29)

MOVEMENT BY THE LEFT.

The hold gained by Warren on the Weldon Railroad was permanently retained, and a line of redoubts formed connecting his position with the old left of the army, on the Jerusalem plankroad. No further movement of consequence, beyond reconnoissances, was made till the end of September, when Gen. Grant, being resolved to push operations on Butler's front, north of the James River, directed a demonstration to be made on the left, with the view of preventing the transfer of reenforcements to the troops opposed to Butler.(30) For this purpose Gen. Warren, with two divisions of the Fifth Corps, and Gen. Parke, with two divisions of the Ninth, moved from the left towards Poplar Spring Church and Peeble's Farm. Gregg's Division of Cavalry at the same time moved further to the left and rear. One of Warren's divisions, under Gen. Griffin, found the Confederates intrenched on Peeble's Farm, and, attacking, carried a redoubt and a line of rifle-pits, taking one gun and about 100 prisoners. At the same time his other division, under Gen. Ayres, carried a small work on the Squirrel Level road. In the afternoon Parke, moving on Warren's left, towards the Boydton road, was fiercely assailed, and forced back in disorder. Griffin's Division, however, came to his support, and the enemy was then checked and repulsed.

Early next morning Gregg met the enemy's cavalry and forced it back. At the same time Mott's Division of Hancock's Corps was withdrawn from the lines and sent to reenforce Parke; but it did not reach the ground in time to be of service. During the afternoon Gregg was heavily attacked on the Duncan road, where he was guarding the left and rear; but repulsed the enemy with considerable loss.

The 2d of October the whole force advanced, but found the enemy had withdrawn to his main intrenchments. A position was then taken up, and the necessary works laid out to extend the Federal intrenched line to the position gained.(31) The loss in this action was above 2,500.

BUTLER'S SUCCESS.

During these occurrences on the extreme left, Gen. Butler had been operating with the Army of the James against the fortifications of Richmond. Crossing on the night of the 8th of September to the north side of the James River with the corps of Birney and Ord, Butler next morning advanced and carried the very strong fortifications and intrenchments below Chapin's farm, known as Fort Harrison, capturing 15 pieces of artillery and the New Market road, with the works defending it.(32) This success was followed up by an assault upon Fort Gilmer, immediately in front of the Chapin's farm fortifications, in which the assailants were repulsed with a loss of about 300 men. The position being one very menacing to Richmond, Gen. Butler made dispositions to hold it permanently. The Confederates endeavored, in several determined assaults, to dislodge him; but he was able

15. The artillery had been previously sent across the Appomattox, by way of Point of Rocks, and parked under concealment within Gen. Butler's lines. It was then taken to the north side of the James when the infantry had debarked.

16. It was supposed that Hancock's troops could be readily landed by running the boats along shore, and throwing out gang-planks. But it was found that the boats could not be run near enough to the shore to effect this purpose, and the difficulty was materially increased by the outrunning tide. Moreover, many of the transports were ill-adapted to this use. Throughout all these operations great inconvenience arose from the lack of a few light-draught river steamers.

17. The inadequate character of Barlow's attacks Gen. Hancock attributes to "the large number of new men in his command, and the small number of experienced officers."—Report of Operations at Deep Bottom.

18. "An estimate of Gen. Butler's was furnished me, putting the enemy's strength north of the James at 8,500 men."—Hancock: Report of Operations at Deep Bottom.

19. During the night the greater part of Gen. Birney's command was massed in rear of the position occupied by Gen. Barlow. The line from the New Market and Malvern Hill road, at a point designated on the map as the "Potteries," to the extreme right, was held by a thin skirmish line only. One of Gen. Mott's best brigades, under Col. Craig (105th Pa.), was sent to Gen. Birney. The remainder of Mott's Division was massed in rear of his picket-line, except a small force left at the "Potteries." Gibbon's Division (temporarily under Col. Smythe) was also massed in rear of the skirmish line, and Barlow's Division was concentrated near the fork of the Darby and Long Bridge roads.

20. Hancock's loss in his own corps was nine hundred and fifteen. In the Tenth Corps and cavalry it is unknown.

21. Warren: Report of Operations on the Weldon Railroad.

22. Gen. Lee, from the time of first reaching Petersburg, never expected to be able long to hold the Weldon Railroad; and four days after his arrival he sent a warning to the Richmond authorities to prepare to supply his army by the Danville line alone. The reply was that they hoped he would do all he could to hold the Weldon Road. To this he answered that of course he would do all he could to hold it, but that he had little faith in his ability to do so. The failure of the Confederate authorities to make any provisions in accordance with his admonition was probably the cause of the desperate assaults he made to dislodge Warren.

23. Warren: Report of Operations on the Weldon Railroad.

24. This turning movement was made by a South Carolina brigade under Gen. Haygood, and the incidents of the attack are thus given by Gen. Warren: "Gen. Haygood's Brigade struck a part of our line where the troops were in echelon; they found themselves almost surrounded, and every one, thinking they had surrendered, ceased firing. Troops immediately advanced to bring them in, when their officers commenced firing, and Capt. Daly, Provost-Marshal of the Fourth Division, was shot by Gen. Haygood. In the mixed condition of our men and the enemy, our line could not fire, and many of the enemy escaped."—Warren: Report of Operations on the Weldon Railroad.

25. The actual loss was 302; the enemy's must have been thrice or four times that number, for Warren's men buried 211 of the Confederate dead.

26. Warren: Report of Operations on the Weldon Railroad.

27. Hancock: Report of Ream's Station.

28. The circumstances above referred to as causing delay are thus detailed by Hancock: As soon as I knew that Wilcox's Division had been ordered down the plankroad, I dispatched a staff-officer to conduct it up. About 5 o'clock a staff-officer from Gen. Mott reported the arrival of 1,700 men of Mott's Division at the forks of the road where the Ream's Station road leaves the plankroad. These troops would have been immediately ordered up; but the staff officer stated that before he could possibly get back with the order Wilcox's Division would have passed, so that nothing would be gained. Orders, therefore, were given to Col. McAllister, commanding the force of Mott's Division, to hold well down the plankroad, in anticipation of any attempt of the enemy's cavalry to pass to our rear. An order was also sent to him to arrest all stragglers and form them into regiments. This order, it appears, was handed by the Orderly bearing it to Gen. Wilcox, who, not observing the address to Col. McAllister, opened the order, and thinking it addressed to him, deployed a part of his division to arrest and form the stragglers from the battlefield. How much delay was caused by this error is not known; but it is known that the division, in any event, would not have arrived in time to be of service."—Report of Ream's Station.

29. Authority for some of the statements in the above account of the action at Ream's Station, is derived from a letter from Gen. Hancock to the writer, detailing the substance of a conversation had by that officer with the Confederate Gen. Heth, who commanded a division in the battle. I extract the following: "Heth would not say positively how many troops they had at Ream's Station, but acknowledges to a very heavy force of infantry and cavalry. He was surprised at learning the smallness of our force. After they had been repulsed in the third charge upon our works, Gen. Hill sent for Heth and told him that he must carry the position, which they certainly did very handsomely by a fourth assault. He admits their losses to have been very severe in killed and wounded."

30. Meade: Report of Campaign of 1864.

31. Meade: Report of Operations.

32. Grant: Report of Operations.

(Continued on second page.)

More Views of Comrades

On The National Tribune's plan for aiding widows. See "The Solemn Duty of Married Soldiers" on the lower half of this page.

Gen. Green B. Raum, Ex-Commissioner of Pensions, writes: "I am gratified to learn that you have taken steps to have all surviving soldiers of our country prepare and file with you for safe keeping the evidence required by the Pension Office of widows applying for pensions, so that this necessary evidence will be ready for use, when required. This is a work of great importance. Many widows are long delayed in receiving pensions by the difficulty in securing evidence of marriage, etc., and many others actually fail to secure pensions because of inability to obtain this required evidence. I earnestly recommend to every surviving soldier that he secure this evidence without delay and deposit it with you for safe keeping. It seems needless for the old soldiers to be assured that The National Tribune Company will faithfully carry out its undertakings in their behalf, and for the benefit of their widows."

Comrade S. Camp, Co. D, 136th N. Y., writes from North Dakota: "I am very glad The National Tribune has taken up such a practical plan of helping widows. I hope to God that this plan will enable many of them to get $12 a month, who would otherwise only get $8."

Comrade Robert Woodward, Co. G, 103d Ohio, and U. S. S. Benton, writes from Canada: "I inclose document to help my wife secure her pension in case I predecease her. She deserves all Uncle Sam can or will contribute. I thank the grand old National Tribune for this service, and will do my best to encourage the boys to send in their papers."

Comrade C. R. Strahan, Co. B, 7th Ind. Cav., writes: "My wife and I hope to still plod along another 40 years, but as there is no certainty of an old veteran living forever, I send you my Preliminary Report."

Comrade Samuel S. Lintner, Co. G, 113th Ill., writes: "I guess I am entitled to some increase myself, but I am so much impressed with what you so clearly set forth that I will attend to my wife's interests first. I do want my widow, in case I leave one, to get her pension without all the 'haranguing' that usually follows a widow's application." Comrade Lintner's Preliminary Report discloses that he is entitled to an increase by reason of age, and he is so informed.

Comrade Wm. F. Stafford writes from a large city in New York State: "My wife and I will engage heart and hand in this good work for the widows. Send us plenty of blank Preliminary Reports. We will drive through the country and see the Comrades. Being connected with the railroad, I will see a great number on their way to Reunions. My wife is an enthusiast on this subject, and will urge ladies to have their husbands fill the blanks."

Comrade Moses J. Riddle, Co. E, 3d Iowa, writes from Texas: "I am much pleased with your plan to save our widows from being asked a whole lot of annoying questions, some of which they probably can not answer. We comrades can clear up such matters now just as well as not. It's a good idea and The National Tribune is just the old, tried and true friend that can carry it out."

Comrade Edwin L. Pettyjohn, 11th Ohio, who rose from private through all the grades of rank to Captain, writes from Illinois: "I have often thought and wondered about my wife's case in case she be left a widow, and I am glad you have taken up this matter. With the able assistance and advice of The National Tribune many of us, in fact most of us, ought to be able to shape up proof and deposit with you, that will insure our widows getting the larger allowance instead of the smaller."

Comrade Josephus Hartman writes from Nebraska: "Some thoughtful comrade was so kind as to send me a copy of your paper, which I have read with great pleasure, and I see in it a very important thing, that is, your plan to aid the widows. I gladly avail myself of it."

Comrade J. L. Eby, M. D., Co. G, 7th Ill., sends his Preliminary Report and writes from California as follows: "Comrade Shoppell: This is a fine thing you are doing for the old soldiers, and I am sure they will appreciate it. I will call their attention to it. I send you other papers to be kept with my report. They will be safest with you."

Comrade Albert Hartman, Co. E, 10th Iowa, sends his Preliminary Report, and writes: "I am thankful for such a friend as the old soldier has in The National Tribune. Comrades around here are all greatly interested in this very practical move to help our widows at a time when they all need help and comfort."

Comrade David Shirk, Co. G, 12th Pa. Reserves, sends his Preliminary Report, and writes: "My wife and myself both thank you. We are getting old, and it is a great comfort to us to have this thing done."

Comrade C. H. Foshay, Co. G, 135th N. Y., afterwards known as 6th N. Y. H. A., writes from Connecticut: "I herewith send you my Preliminary Report to aid my widow, if I leave one. We hope it will not be required for some time. We both enjoy fair health, but we have been married 47 years and know that separation must come sometime."

Comrade R. W. Perrott, Sergeant, Co. I, 24th Wis., writes: "I must express my gratitude for your successful efforts in behalf of old soldiers and their widows. May the memory of duty well performed comfort you in this life and be placed to your credit in the blessed life to come."

Comrade Geo. Bauner, Co. A, 19th Ind. (Iron Brigade), writes: "I thank The National Tribune in advance for this well-devised plan to help my widow, if I leave one. I doubt if she could get a pension without this aid."

Comrade Fred Rapp, Co. G, 10th N. J., writes from Mitchel County, Iowa: "In behalf of my wife and myself I sincerely thank you for the devoted interest you take in the welfare of old soldiers and their families."

Comrade Geo. A. P. Cumming, Sergeant, Co. B, 130th Ill., writes: "We thank you very much for your kindness to your veteran comrades and their wives. It is a grand step in the right direction, and deserves the warmest approbation."

Comrade Wm. H. West, Sergeant, Co. E, 7th Mo. Cav., writes: "I am old and quite feeble, but I will make known to other comrades the very practical plan you have perfected to aid our widows."

Comrade James C. Foster, Co. F, 5th Wis., writes: "Inclosed find Preliminary Report. I go right into anything recommended by The National Tribune. Fact is, I could not get along at all without the paper. May interest you to know that among the benefits it has been to me it enabled me to find an old comrade who owed me $140. He planked up like a little man, although the note was 30 years old."

Comrade Geo. W. Richards, Co. A, 136th Ill., writes: "I am glad that a way is provided for my widow, if I leave one, to get her pension without all of the trouble and vexation that I have known many widows to endure. I am a pension attorney myself, and see the full value of this plan."

Comrade Royal S. Hurlburt, 23d N. Y. Battery, writes from Niagara Co.: "My wife and I thank God for The National Tribune, and ask Him to bless the comrades who conduct it."

Comrade Wm. Gilkinson writes from Ohio: "Any married soldier will be very foolish if he neglects to file papers with you, so that his widow can get a pension without any trouble. I consider it my duty to call the attention of all old soldiers of this community to your liberal offer."

Comrade Wm. E. Wood, 8th Kans. and 9th Ill. Cav., writes from Missouri: "I have one of the best wives in the world, and I am glad that I can do something now that will make it easy for her to get a pension, if I leave her a widow. May the Lord prosper The National Tribune, our beloved paper."

Comrade J. L. Hummel writes from Kansas: "Your plan enabling old soldiers to safely deposit information that will help their widows is very commendable, the more so as the invitation is extended to those who are not subscribers as well as to subscribers. I will see that all comrades around here learn of it."

Comrade Alexander Chisholm, Sergeant, Co. K, 116th Pa. (Irish Brigade), writes: "Your idea of looking ahead for the widow is O. K. Just like The National Tribune. It has a good head, and its heart is in the right place. I have been a constant reader of the paper for many years, and would be lost without it."

Comrade Asahel Walker, Adjutant Wm. Goodman Post, Department of Michigan, writes: "This is one of the best things ever proposed. Send me plenty of blank Preliminary Reports and I will see they are filled out. I can do that much for my comrades and their wives."

ADDITIONAL CLERKS. THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE needs help in its pension department, and this seems a good place to catch the eye of those who are competent. The qualifications, strictly required, are: good, trustworthy character, thorough acquaintance with pension and claim business, and applicants must be veterans, or the widows, sons or daughters of veterans. Apply by letter or in person to R. W. Shoppell, The National Tribune Office, 339 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D. C.

The Solemn Duty of Married Soldiers.

It does not follow as a matter of course, if a man was a soldier, even if he is a pensioner, that it will be an easy matter for his widow to get a pension. As a matter of fact widows' claims are unnecessarily delayed, and in some cases never allowed for lack of evidence, which the husband, usually, could have supplied during his lifetime.

This important matter has been discussed, from time to time, in the columns of The National Tribune, and has been made the subject of orders by Commanders-in-Chief of the Grand Army, but every appeal heretofore was deficient in one essential particular: no safe and permanent place was suggested for the custody of the information.

The National Tribune Co., in a practical way, proposes to supply this deficiency. In a fire-proof room, in its own building, and under lock and key to insure privacy, it will care for such papers and information until such time as they may be needed, even if such time is many years distant. The National Tribune Co. is incorporated. Having a perpetual existence, the death of the present managers of the Company will not disturb the business or change the custody of the papers. No safer place in the world can be found for the purpose.

But The National Tribune will go further in this commendable work. It will assist in getting in shape the proofs and information required. The first step for every comrade is to answer the few simple questions that are printed below under the heading "Preliminary Report." This report will disclose the case and enable The National Tribune to complete all the proof required.

There will be no charge whatever for this service, but **it will be expected of every comrade that he will call the attention of other married comrades** to this matter and influence them to do likewise. No other missionary work among comrades can be productive of more good. Many comrades who are not subscribers to The National Tribune will not learn of this important service if subscribers do not call their attention to it. Extra blanks will be sent for distribution upon request.

Comrades who attend to this matter promptly will be taking the best possible step toward securing for their widows the higher rate of pension: that is, $12 a month instead of $8.

Preliminary Report

To aid my widow, if I leave one, in getting her pension.

NOTE.—This report is short, and can be easily written out on letter or legal cap paper. This course avoids cutting the paper. **Be sure to write the names and dates clearly and distinctly.** When report is ready mail it to **R. W. SHOPPELL, or THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, Washington, D. C.**

Date_____, 1904.

Soldier's Name_____, P. O. _____,

State _____. I was in the service from_____day of_____, 186____, to

the_____day of_____, 186____, as a_____,
(Give rank, also company and regiment.)

and was honorably discharged at _____, on the_____day

of_____, 186____. Are you a pensioner?_____. At what rate? $_____per month.
(Yes or no.)

Were you pensioned under the old law or the new? _____
(The new law is the act of June 27, 1890.)

What wounds, diseases or disabilities, if any, are written on your pension certificate?_____

_____

I was married to_____on the_____day of_____,
(Give wife's name before marriage.)

18_____, by_____, at_____
(Give name of clergyman or person officiating.)

At marriage my age was_____. Her age was_____

Is there a court or church record of this marriage? _____

Were either of you previously married?_____

If a prisoner of war, state for how long_____

Remarks: _____
(If remarks are of considerable length they should be written on a separate sheet of paper.)