

To quote this book, use the following: Benedict, George Grenville. Vermont in the Civil War. Burlington VT: Free Press Association, 1888 (Note chapters 1-20 are in volume 1, chapters 21-32 in volume 2. Page numbers are true to the original.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Staff—Vermonters in other than Vermont Organizations—Comparative Exhibit of Deaths in Action and from all Causes.

No class of men contributed more of labor, thought and courage to the National cause than the staff. Upon it devolved the duties of the supply of the troops; the medical and surgical care of the soldiers; the keeping of the regimental, brigade and corps accounts and records; the preparation and transmission of orders in camp in and in the field—services second to none other in importance. The real commander in many a trying spot, was not the general in whose name the orders were given and who took the credit of what was accomplished, but some member of his staff. In the limited space remaining I this volume nothing like a full record of the service of Vermonters on the staff can be given; but it will be seen that some of them occupied prominent and responsible positions.

Among the Vermonters who rendered distinguished services in the field, as members of the army, corps or division staff, were Lieut. Colonel Albert V. Colburn, who was General McClellan's assistant adjutant general during almost the entire period of his command of the Army of the Potomac, and in that capacity conducted most of his headquarters correspondence, and was one of his most trusted aids; Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General Orville E. Babcock, who was inspector general of the Sixth Corps and aid on the staff of General U. S. Grant and high in his confidence during the entire period in which he was general-in-chief of the United States armies; Lieut. Colonel Edward R. Platt, who was chief of artillery of the Sixth Corps and of the Left Grand Division of the Army of the Potomac; and judge advocate

general of the army under Hooker and Meade, an officer whose modesty alone kept him from more rapid and higher promotion; Lieut. Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General and Brevet Major General Amos Beckwith, who was General Sherman's assistant commissary general of subsistence in the Atlanta campaign, on the march to the sea, and till the surrender of General J. E. Johnston's army in April 1865; Captain and Brevet Brigadier General Edward W. Smith, assistant adjutant general on the staffs of Generals Hunter, Gilmore, Butler and Weitzel, and chief of staff to General Terry; Captain and Brevet Colonel Daniel D. Wheeler, who rendered brilliant service on the staffs of Generals W. T. H. Brooks, Ord and Weitzel, and as assistant adjutant general of the Eighteenth and Twenty-fifth Army Corps; and Captain and Brevet Lieut. Colonel George W. Hooker, who after service on the staff of the Second Vermont brigade, under Generals Stoughton and Stannard, became assistant adjutant general of Stannard's brigade of the Eighteenth Corps and of the Third Division of the Twenty-fourth Corps under General Devens.

In the Quartermaster's department, Perley P. Pitkin, of Montpelier,ⁱ went out as regimental quartermaster of the Second Vermont Volunteers and was then for a time Brigade quartermaster of the First Vermont Brigade. In April 1862, he was promoted to be assistant quartermaster of volunteers with the rank of captain, and reported to General Rufus Ingalls, chief quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac, at White House, Virginia. The work assigned to Captain Pitkin was the receiving of supplies at the army base from the fleet of army vessels and distributing them to the several army corps. In this labor Captain Pitkin had under him over *twelve hundred* civilian employees at a time. When the army was withdrawn from the peninsula he was ordered to Washington with his brigade of subordinates and then (during

the Antietam campaign) to Harper's Ferry, where he was chief depot quartermaster in charge of all the supplies for the army. This most responsible position he held at the bases of supply of the army established successively at Warrenton Junction, Falmouth, Belle Plain and Acquia Creek, Washington, Frederick, Md. (during the Gettysburg campaign), and Alexandria, from which point the army was supplied during the winter of 1863-4, its principal supply station being at Brandy Station, fifty-seven miles from the base, with branch depots at Bealton and Culpeper. When Grant's overland campaign began, in May, 1864, the surplus supplies having been sent back to Alexandria,¹¹ Captain Pitkin was placed in chief charge of the immense train of 4,000 wagons which carried ten days' rations for the army, with ammunition and other supplies. While at Spottsylvania, Captain Pitkin was selected to be the bearer of despatches from General Grant to the War Department, which could be entrusted only to a most responsible messenger. With an escort of regular cavalry he made the journey to Washington and back in four days, and then resumed his duties as chief depot quartermaster at Belle Plain. Here, to the care of the enormous quantities of supplies which were provided for the further overland march of the army, were added the duties attending the arrival of thousands of recruits and reinforcements; the receipt of many thousands of prisoners, arriving from the front to be forwarded to Alexandria and Annapolis; and the care of the army of wounded and sick soldiers, on their way to the general hospitals. Captain Pitkin moved with the supply depot, successively to Port Royal on the Rappahannock, White House on the Pamunkey, and City Point on the James, where he remained as chief depot quartermaster during the summer of 1864. July 8th, 1864, he was promoted to the rank of colonel and assistant quartermaster. During this period the army numbered upwards of 100,000 men, with

50,000 horses and mules. For the subsistence of the former 100,000 pounds of bread, 125,000 pounds of meat, 10,000 pounds of coffee, 10,000 pounds of sugar, and when obtainable large quantities of vegetables, were furnished each day; while the latter consumed over 600,000 pounds of grain and an equal quantity of forage, daily. Once in three or four months 100,000 pairs of shoes and 200,000 pairs of stockings and at a little longer interval as many coats and pantaloons, and twice as many changes of under-clothing, were distributed. For each periodical shoeing of the animals Colonel Pitkin received and distributed 200,000 pounds of horse-shoes. Add to all this the care and transportation of the enormous quantities of ordnance and surgical supplies required where armies of such magnitude were in constant collision, and it may be realized that the duties of chief quartermaster in charge of the army base were such as could be borne only by a man of great physical vigor, as well as superior executive ability and untiring industry. They were performed by Colonel Pitkin with an ability and fidelity which won for him the unvarying commendation of his superiors. The successive commanders of the army all recognized his value, and relied on him with a confidence which was never disappointed. The opinion of his immediate superior is expressed in the annual report of General Rufus Ingalls, chief quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac for the year ending June 30th, 1863, in the following words:

To the quartermasters of this army I feel under a great weight of indebtedness, especially to those who have had charge of the great depots. I have referred to them in the body of this report; still I would be doing much injustice if I did not mention Captain P. P. Pitkin, assistant quartermaster, who had had charge of great depots, and whose business for the year has been extremely heavy. He is a most meritorious, energetic and trustworthy officer.

This is the highest praise accorded to any man in the report. In November, 1864, after two years of such service, in positions second only to the highest in responsibility, and

second to none in labor and care, Colonel Pitkin resigned his position in the army, to enter upon his duties as Quartermaster General of the State of Vermont.

John G. Haskell, born in Milton, was in Lawrence, Kan., at the outbreak of the war, and was appointed quartermaster of the Tenth Kansas infantry; was promoted to be captain and A. Q. M., in June, 1862; and served on the staffs of Generals J. G. Blunt, John McNeil, Frederick Steele and Joseph Reynolds. Captain Haskell was chief quartermaster of the Army of the Frontier, which guarded the Missouri and Kansas border, during the year 1863. From April, 1864, to September, 1865, he was depot and purchasing quartermaster of the Department of Arkansas and of the Fifteenth Army Corps, with headquarters at Little Rock, Ark. He was mustered out in December, 1865, and was brevetted as major and A. Q. M. for faithful and meritorious service. Captain Haskell did staff duty in the field in various border campaigns, and was engaged in the battle of Prairie Grove, Ark., December 7th, 1862. His accounts as depot and purchasing quartermaster amounted at times to a million dollars a month.

Gardner S. Blodgett, of Burlington, was appointed assistant quartermaster of volunteers with rank of captain, in August, 1861, and was first stationed at Burlington, where he purchased the horses for the First Vermont cavalry, and provided the equipment for the regiment. In May, 1862, he was ordered to Annapolis, Md., and was made chief depot quartermaster of that important depot. He held this position during most of the remainder of the war. Here he had charge of the great parole camp, where the many thousand prisoners of war paroled at Richmond and Belle Isle were received. Here the Ninth Corps, of 25,000 men, was reorganized and equipped in April, 1864, and here large numbers of Union troops were quartered, on their way to the front. Captain Blodgett was for a time chief quartermaster of the Eighth Army Corps under General Lew Wallace, with

Headquarters at Baltimore, leaving that position in the spring of 1864, to attend to the outfit of the Ninth Corps at Annapolis. During his service at that depot he issued 150,000 uniforms, 50,000 tents, 300,000 blankets, immense quantities of camp and garrison equipage; 9,000,000 pounds of grain and forage; 200,000 tons of coal for the government steamers and the enormous quantities of lumber required for the barracks for the parole camp, army hospitals and other camps. Captain Blodgett provided transportation for many thousands of paroled prisoners forwarded from Annapolis. His accounts, aggregating millions of dollars, bore the rigid tests of the department, and his services were highly commended by his superior officers. In July, 1864, he was appointed assistant quartermaster in the regular army with the rank of captain; and in March, 1865, he was brevetted major, for faithful and meritorious service during the war. He resigned in October, 1866.

After the expiration of the term of service of Asa P. Blunt, of St. Johnsbury, as colonel of the Twelfth regiment, he was appointed, by President Lincoln, assistant quartermaster of volunteers with rank of captain, and in April, 1864, was assigned to duty as depot and issuing quartermaster of General Butler's expedition up the James river. In October, 1864, Captain Blunt was stationed at Norfolk, Va. Here for six months he had charge of the immense quantity of Government property, extensive wharves and stores at that point, having on his pay-roll over 1,300 employees. After this he was successively chief quartermaster of the Department of Virginia, of the Department of the Potomac, and in responsible positions at Fortress Monroe and Charleston, S.C.; and was brevetted colonel and quartermaster of volunteers and brevet brigadier general of volunteers, for faithful and meritorious service. He was subsequently appointed captain and A. Q. M. in the regular army, and since the war has served with high credit as commandant of the United

State Military Prison at Fort Leavenworth for many years, and in other responsible positions.

Captain H. C. Hodges, deputy quartermaster general U.S.A. in 1862, had charge of the base of supplies for all the troops in the Department of Kansas and New Mexico. He expended here over \$4,000,000, and the report of Q. M. General Meigs testifies that he managed his important department "with fidelity and ability." He was brevetted lieutenant colonel in March, 1865, for faithful and meritorious service during the war.

Edmund A. Morse, of Rutland, was quartermaster of the First and of the Seventh regiments. In August, 1862, he was appointed captain and A. Q. M., and placed in charge of all the railroads in the Department of the Gulf, including the building of the military railroads from the Mississippi river to Lake Pontchartrain, and from Brazos to the Rio Grande. The ship yards were also under his management, where at that time 500 carpenters were employed, and he had 25 saw-mills getting gout lumber. Three thousand men were on this rolls, besides a large number of colored laborers. In this important position not less than \$20,000,000 passed through his hands; and his services were warmly commended by his superior, General Holabird. Captain James H. Platt, Jr., of Hartford, was acting chief quartermaster of the Sixth corps in 1864; and other Vermonters held positions of high responsibility in this department of the service.

The brigade and regimental quartermasters and commissaries of the Vermont organizations were, as a class, remarkably efficient officers. They labored night and day. When the troops were sleeping they were in the saddle, and their fidelity and merit were recognized by frequent promotions for faithful and meritorious service. Of the 34 regimental quartermasters and commissaries of Vermont regiments, 16 were

thus promoted to the rank of captain or to high rank in the quartermaster's department, viz., Adoniram Austin, Harry Brownson, John W. Clark, Frederick Crain, A. L. Carlton, A. S. Dewey, Edward Dewey, John Q. Dickinson, George E. Jones, E. A. Morse, P. P. Pitkin, Charles H. Reynolds, C. V. H. Sabin, F. O. Sawyer, A. B. Valentine, Mark H. Wooster. Assistant quartermasters G. S. Blodgett, H. Brownson and F. Crain received the brevet rank of major, A. P. Blunt the brevet rank of colonel and brigadier general, and P. P. Pitkin the full rank of colonel—the highest grade but one in the quartermaster's department.

Vermonters held important positions on the medical staff of the army. Early in the war a State Board of Medical Examiners was appointed to examine candidates for appointment as surgeons and assistant surgeons of Vermont regiments. It consisted of three eminent physicians, Dr. S. W. Thayer, Jr., of Burlington, Dr. Edward E. Phelps of Windsor, and Dr. Charles L. Allen of Rutland. In February, 1862, Dr. Phelps was commissioned by the Secretary of War as brigade surgeon of volunteers, and was succeeded on the board of examiners by Dr. Hiram F. Stevens. This board practically determined all the appointments and promotions of the surgeons and assistant surgeons of the Vermont regiments, and secured for the troops superior medical care.

In December, 1861, Dr. Phelps was sent by the governor to Camp Griffin, to investigate the causes of the sickness prevailing in the First Vermont brigade. In February, 1862, he was appointed brigade surgeon of that brigade. At a later date he was placed in charge of the general hospital at Brattleboro, at which over 4,000 sick and wounded soldiers were received during the war. Thousands of the Vermont troops were inspected by Dr. Phelps for admission to the service, and his services throughout the war were of the highest importance and value.

The first of the United States general hospitals estab-

lished in Vermont was the Baxter Hospital at Burlington, opened after the engagement at Lee's Mill in April, 1862, under the charge of Dr. S. W. Thayer, Jr. At this hospital over 2,000 sick and wounded soldiers were subsequently received, over 60 per cent. of whom were returned to duty, a larger proportion than was returned to duty from any other United States hospital, so far as is known; the average of men so returned from the Washington and Philadelphia hospitals being about 25 per cent. Dr. Thayer's services throughout the war were of the utmost value.

The third United States hospital established in Vermont was the Sloan Hospital, which was opened in June, 1864, at Montpelier, under the charge of Assistant Surgeon William B. Casey, who was soon succeeded by Surgeon Henry Janes. At this hospital about 1,500 sick and wounded soldiers were cared for in the last year of the war, with a very high average of men returned to duty.

In all some 7,500 sick and wounded men, including a thousand or more soldiers of other States, were received and cared for in the Vermont hospitals, with results considerably above the highest elsewhere recorded. As a result of this superior care, while the ratio of Vermont troops killed in action exceeded that of any other State save one, the proportion of Vermonters who died of their wounds was much less than the general average, and perhaps less than that of any other State.

Among the Vermont surgeons who rendered eminent service in the field was Henry Janes of Waterbury. He went out as surgeon of the Third Vermont. After the battles of Crampton's Gap and South Mountain, in September, 1862, he was detached from the First Vermont brigade by the medical director of the Sixth Corps, and placed in charge of an extensive army hospital in Frederick, Md. In May, 1863, he was appointed surgeon of volunteers, with rank of major, and placed in charge of the Sixth Corps hospital, which after

The Chancellorsville campaign was filled with wounded men. After the battle of Gettysburg, Dr. Janes was placed by Dr. Letterman, medical director of the Army of the Potomac, in chief charge of the immense hospitals established in and about Gettysburg, in which were placed upwards of 20,000 wounded Union and Confederate soldiers left upon the field. In this most responsible position Dr. Janes had upwards of 250 surgeons under his direction and command. Among other things he organized a special hospital of 2,000 beds, for the more dangerously wounded men, in which was illustrated the conservative treatment (as opposed to amputation) of hundreds of gunshot fractures of the femur, with a higher average of recoveries than has been attained in any army hospital before or since. In this hospital over 450 amputations of the lower extremities and a still larger number of the upper extremities were performed, and great numbers of penetrating wounds of the head, chest and abdomen were treated. In the following winter he was transferred to the charge of the extensive South Street United States General Hospital in Philadelphia. During the summer of 1864 he had charge of the United States hospital steamer *State of Maine*, which was occupied in transferring many thousands of sick and wounded men from the Army of the Potomac to the general hospitals. In the fall of 1864, at the request of Governor Smith, Surgeon Janes was assigned to the charge of the Sloan Hospital at Montpelier and remained there till the end of the war. In all, between 49,000 and 50,000 sick and wounded men passed under his care—a record hardly equaled in the army.

Dr. Charles L. Allen of Rutland, in June, 1862, was appointed by President Lincoln surgeon of volunteers, with the rank of major, and was assigned to duty as a member of the National Examining Board, at Washington, by which the candidates for appointment as surgeons and assistant surgeons of volunteers, U.S.A., were examined.

Dr. Allen's services in this responsible position continued for two years, when he was appointed medical purveyor of the Department of the South, being the second medical officer in rank in the department, and serving with high credit.

Surgeon Jed H. Baxter, son of Hon. Portus Baxter of Derby, after meritorious service in the field under General Banks and on the staff of General McClellan during the peninsular campaign, was placed in charge of the great Campbell Hospital in Washington, having 1,500 beds, which position he held for eighteen months, till advanced to the position of chief medical officer of the provost marshal general's bureau. No less than 15,000 sick and wounded men passed under his care during the war. He remained in the army after the close of the war, and as chief medical purveyor, U.S.A., with the rank of colonel, is second in rank only to the surgeon general.

Dr. Samuel J. Allen of Hartford, went out as surgeon of the Fourth Vermont. In December, 1862, he was promoted to be brigade surgeon, and then surgeon-in-chief of the Second division of the Sixth Corps. November 1st, 1864, he was appointed surgeon of volunteers, U.S.A., with the rank of major, and was appointed medical inspector of the Sixth Corps on the staff of General H. G. Wright. In all these positions he rendered faithful and eminent service.

Want of space forbids detailed mentions of the valuable and devoted service of the regimental surgeons, as well as of the services of the Vermont commissioners for the care of sick and disabled soldiers. Of these, Commissioner Frank F. Holbrook, during the last three years of the war, visited and attended to the wants of 12,000 Vermont soldiers in over a hundred different hospitals; and Commissioner Daniel L. Lyman rendered similar service for four months, from December, 1862, to April, 1863. Thousands of sick and disabled Vermont soldiers in the army hospitals in New York received attention and care from Colonel Frank E. Howe,

Military agent for the State of Vermont in that city. Robert R. Corson, Esq., military agent for Vermont at Philadelphia, also gave unremitting attention to the wounded Vermonters, brought by thousands from the front to Philadelphia; and his humane care of the hundreds of living skeletons who were shipped from the Confederate prison pens to Annapolis, is worthy of especial mention.

VERMONTERS WHO SERVED IN OTHER THAN VERMONT ORGANIZATIONS

The limits of this work do not permit any adequate account of the services of Vermonters who served in the regular army and in the regiments of other States. An incomplete list of native Vermonters who held commissions in other than Vermont organizations, prepared with much labor for these pages and doubtless the only such list in existence, is reluctantly omitted from this volume for want of space in which to present it. It comprises the names and condensed records of six native Vermonters who held the full rank of major-general; of fifteen brigadier-generals, seven of whom also held the brevet rank of major-general; of twenty-five colonels, eight of whom held the brevet rank of brigadier-general; of thirteen lieutenant colonels; of forty-five majors, including surgeons and paymaster; and of two hundred and six captains and lieutenants. Many of these officers fell in battle, and many served with high distinction. Among them were Major General Israel B. Richardson, born in Burlington, who commanded the First division of the Second Army Corps and fell at Antietam; Major General William F. Smith, born in St. Albans, who commanded a division of the Fourth Corps in the original organization of the Army of the Potomac, and the Second division of the Sixth Corps in the Antietam campaign; who commanded the Sixth Corps in the Rappahannock and Fredericksburg campaigns and the

Eighteenth Army Corps before Petersburg, and won high fame as chief engineer of the Department of the Cumberland and of the military Division of the Mississippi; Major General Joseph A. Mower, born in Woodstock, who commanded a division of the Sixteenth Corps, and distinguished himself at Vicksburg and in the southwest; Major General George C. Strong, born in Stockbridge, Vt., who commanded the storming column at Fort Wagner in July, 1863, and fell in that fruitless assault; Brigadier and Brevet Major General Thomas E. G. Ransom, born in Norwich, who commanded the Thirteenth Corps in the Red River campaign and the Sixteenth Corps in the Atlanta campaign, and the Seventeenth Corps in Sherman's march to the sea, upon which he died; Major General William B. Hazen, born in Hartford, Vt., who commanded the Second division of the Fifteenth Corps in the Atlanta campaign and who stormed Fort McAllister, the fall of which gave back Savannah to the Union; Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, and Generals Truman Seymour, Charles C. Hovey, John C. Caldwell, Benjamin S. Roberts and other brigade and regimental commanders, whose names appear on many bright pages of the history of the war. The records of many of these are obtainable from the registers of the United States Army and of other States;--but of the services of the native Vermonters enrolled among the rank and file of the regiments and batteries of the regular army and of other States, who were numbered by thousands,ⁱⁱⁱ no chronicle can be made. It is believed that they sustained the reputation of their native State wherever they fought.

LOSSES OF THE VERMONT TROOPS.

A careful statistical exhibit of the numbers of deaths in the United States Army, during the war, by States, compiled from the records of the adjutant general's office at Washington, by Mr. Joseph H. Kirkley of that office, was published

These statistics assert that the deaths among Vermont troops in action exceeded those of any other northern State except Michigan—whose regiments comprised many native Vermonters; and that of the Vermont troops more died from all causes in proportion to numbers, than of the troops of any other northern State but Michigan and Iowa. Taken in connection with the facts, shown by the census of 1860, that a larger proportion of natives of Vermont were residents of other States, than of any other State, that there were in the other States included in this table in 1861 more than half as many native Vermonters as there were within the borders of Vermont,^{iv} and the fact that the Vermont troops were natives of the State in larger proportion than those of either of the other three States names,^v these official figures confirm the assertion made in the introduction to this history that in proportion to population more sons of Vermont fell in battle and more gave their lives to the cause of the Union than of any other northern State. They show that adding to the killed those who died of wounds Vermont's proportion of fatal casualties in action exceeded that of every other State save her sister mountain State of New Hampshire, more of whose wounded men died, in proportion to the number killed in battle than of the wounded Vermonters—owing probably to the policy which Vermont was the earliest State to adopt, of bringing home her wounded men, and to the superior percentage of them who recovered. The number of Vermont troops killed in action exceeded the general ratio of

killed in the army by 25 men in every thousand. Vermonters killed and those who died of wounds exceeded the general ratio by 20 in every thousand. The deaths from all causes among the Vermont troops exceeded the general ratio by 24 in every thousand.^{vi}

The records show that of the two brigades of the Army of the Union which had the most men killed and mortally wounded, one was the First Vermont brigade, and that of the 54 regiments of the army which had over 200 men killed in battle, four were Vermont regiments^{vii}—a number largely in excess of Vermont's proportion of regiments and of troops. The significance of such statistics as indicating the fighting character of the troops will hardly be questioned. Soldiers at least know that in the long run and as a general rule, the greatest losses in action will be found among the troops that are oftenest put in places of danger, that do not know when they are beaten, and that fight when others fly.

ⁱ General Pitkin's native town is Marshfield, Vt.

ⁱⁱ In charge of Captain John W. Clark, A. Q. M.

ⁱⁱⁱ The enlistments in the regular army credited to Vermonter were 720 in number.

^{iv} Population of Vermont in 1860, 315,098. Native of Vermont residing in California, Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode island, Massachusetts and Maine, 168,781.

^v The official records show that the proportion of native Americans among the Vermont troops was 82.23 per cent. and among the New Hampshire troops 71.08 per cent. Of the 85,479 Michigan troops but 21,517 were natives of Michigan. Of the Iowa troops the proportion of native Iowans doubtless was still smaller.

^{vi} Killed in action in the army, 22.87 in each thousand; killed and died of wounds in the army, 37.67 in each thousand; deaths from all causes in the army, 123.12 in each thousand.

^{vii} The Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth Vermont regiments.—Colonel William P. Fox, *Century Magazine*, May, 1888.