

OPEN LETTERS.

A Trained Military Reserve.¹

I. OUR DISBANDED VETERANS.

A QUESTION of the highest importance to a nation that maintains only a small standing army is that of a trained military reserve — a reserve to the active regulars and the militia. Roughly, I estimate the number of volunteer veterans of the civil war, and militia veterans in the whole country, who had good military training between 1861 and 1865, at one million. These veterans now average fifty years of age and are nearly all exempt from service, and there is no body of men in training to replace them.

There are perhaps 200,000 well-trained soldiery at present, counting the active and veteran militia under 45 years of age, the discharged regulars, and the old soldiers of foreign armies who are now citizens here. There should be at all times at least one million men of this class actually enrolled and accounted for.

One way to keep the number and the status good in times of peace would be to pass young men through a short service of training, carry them on the rolls as reserves, and hold them to an interest in the maintenance and development of the military system. Some such method as this proved the salvation of Prussia after her conquest by Napoleon, early in the present century. The magnificent military establishment founded by the Great Elector, and so zealously fostered by Frederick the Great, lost its prestige when pitted against Napoleon, and after the French victory over the Prussians and their allies in 1806-7, Frederick William III. was constrained by the terms of peace to reduce his standing army to 42,000 men. A very clever war minister, among other things, limited the term of service to six months, and in a few years Prussia had a large trained reserve ready for the field, and yet the number in actual service at any one time did not exceed the maximum allowed. In later wars with Napoleon, Prussia came to the front as a military power, and she has since kept her place. The present one-year volunteer system of the German Empire answers the same purpose, and distributes annually throughout the nation a body of soldiery trained for field service.

The principle could be tried here by adopting plans for special education in the regular army and the militia as suggested by General Kautz and Colonel Rice in this magazine. The enlistment in either branch of service would be voluntary, but after the training had been received at the expense of the state and the soldier discharged, he should be enrolled among the reserves of his district. His discharge should be evidence that he had received a stated amount of preparation, and should give him precedence over recruits for promotion whenever the reserves are called to arms. In infantry, at maximum strength, there is one officer (counting those not commissioned) to every six men, and the whole number of trained reserves available for service would be needed to officer new levies in case of an uprising.

¹ See the articles on "Our National Military System," in THE CENTURY for October, 1888.

A competent leader for every six men would make soldiers out of the whole mass in a very short time.

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II. SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATION.

As one who has personal and practical knowledge of the development of the National Guard system from the old militia, I ask attention to some defects in the system and to some suggestions for possible remedies.

The adjutant-general, in all the States, is the ranking officer on the military staff of the governor, usually the ranking officer in the State. While the position is quite uniformly a political, appointive one, yet in the majority of instances the desirability of permanence is recognized, many of these gentlemen having held office through more than one term. In every instance, I believe, the incumbent is one who has fairly earned his appointment by military service. Nevertheless the tenure of office should be changed at once, for the danger is imminent, in our larger States, that the military character of the function will be lost in the political. If the United States should be permitted to assume any control of our State troops in times of peace, it can only be in some such way as detailing officers to act as adjutants-general to the governors of States, for the usual tour of detached service. In no other way would the National Guard as a whole consent to United States supervision, in the sense of the communication of Colonel Rice. This is the debatable point in his paper, and to that I desire, in behalf of many comrades, briefly to address myself.

The brigade and regimental commanders in the National Guard throughout the country are to a very large degree men of soldierly training and instincts, with a good war record; there are very few of this grade of officers in the National Guard who have not done full duty on the field of battle. The same is true, to some extent, with the company commanders, at least in many of the States. Men of this character would not be pleased to be sent to school to the young officers of the army; a proper respect for their position would forbid it. More than that, the discipline of the command would suffer when its head conducted its administration under the supervision of another. Such a plan is unwise. The officers of the army who visit our encampments, while always ready to give any assistance in their power, do not come in the capacity of *instructors*. They come as *inspectors*, to report on our efficiency and readiness for service if called upon. I have never met an officer detailed to my encampments who considered himself an instructor, nor one who failed to avoid any appearance of criticising my routine, drill, or administration, while all have been prompt to assist me in any way I might desire. A proper regard for military discipline would forbid a commanding officer surrendering his command, even for a moment, to another; he would richly deserve the loss of the respect of his men, and would probably get his deserts. The

commanding officers of brigades, regiments, and companies in the National Guard need a strengthening of their just power, certainly not a weakening, as "army instructors" would surely bring about.

Granting that the commanding officers of the National Guard in general are competent, although in some States the absence of a military board and the pernicious system of elections are responsible for some incapable officers, it is not at this end of the line that reform is most needed. The rank and file in too many companies are banded together in a sort of social military club, the social character sometimes being of first, and again, in other organizations, of secondary importance. When largely social, the membership is prone to be confined to a narrow circle of society, and the support of the company becomes a heavy pecuniary burden. At the same time the military efficiency is likely to become impaired. Under other circumstances, the monotony of drill drives many to seek discharge, and the membership is very unstable. I have known a company of forty to change completely its membership in two years; it is not uncommon, indeed it is quite the rule, to find one-third of a company new men at each annual encampment. In one sense these frequent discharges are beneficial, as some knowledge of drill is widely diffused in a community, but it makes a drudgery for the drill-officers, who are continually breaking in recruits. All commanding officers in the National Guard find this the most trying feature in their service, the same thing being gone over year after year, reaching a certain point only to go over it again. Many have come to the conclusion that the only relief will be found in a total change of the system, and something like the following has met the approval of many competent officers:

The strength of the National Guard to be proportioned to the population—say a battalion to each congressional district. The officers to be commissioned for an indefinite period, during good behavior, after passing a military board. Each regimental organization to have lineal promotion on examination. The brigade, regimental, and company commanders to receive sufficient allowances to cover their expenses, and all officers United States pay when in active service. The assistant adjutants-general on brigade staffs, and adjutants of regiments, to be United States officers detailed for that duty. Each district to be required to furnish a stipulated number of enlisted men for one year,—or two possibly,—to be chosen by lot when voluntary enlistments fail. The district to furnish suitable armories and pay a portion of the expense, the State to furnish uniforms (always of United States regulation pattern) and equipment, as now. Attendance on drill, authorized parades, and annual encampments to be enforced by statute, and a small *per diem* paid for such service. Of course a man can reenlist as often as his captain chooses to accept him, but the district must be compelled to furnish its quota, and no more—that is, an excess in one district cannot be credited to another not so fortunate. This would give us a reliable force, one under perfect control, and with little more expense than the present system. The company subalterns and junior field-officers, being in the line of promotion to command, would not need money allowances beyond pay when on duty.

Of course there are many matters of detail not touched

upon, but the main features are not difficult to understand, and, it would seem, must stand as self-evident facts. The National Guard is an absolute necessity if we would avoid the cost of a standing army. How to make it more efficient is the question now seeking solution.

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III. NEED OF PRACTICAL TRAINING.

How many of our National Guardsmen know how to take care of themselves on the march and in camp? This is essential for soldiers to know, and they should be instructed in that respect by actual experience, so as to be ready in case they are called upon for field service. When the National Guardsmen are ordered to go into summer encampments in their different States, instead of being transported by rail or by boat, they should march there—be properly equipped, and the rations issued the same as they would be in active service. Officers and men would learn more on one march than they would in camp, where everything is prepared for them, if they were there a month, and they would never forget it. What the National Guardsmen want is more practical work and less of the parade and review while in camp. There should be no rifle practice except volley and skirmish firing, which should be practiced more than it is. It not only makes the men familiar with the rifle, but also teaches them steadiness in the ranks and confidence in one another, so that when the word of command is given they would be as one man. In case of riot this would be invaluable to a command. Visitors should be allowed in camp on stated days only, and they should be few. Nearly every State camp is overrun with visitors, taking the attention of the soldiers from their duties, and putting the officers to great expense in entertaining their friends.

It should be esteemed an honor to be a member of the National Guard, and every inducement should be offered to the young men of the country to join it. The officers should be selected with care, and should consist of men in whom the rank and file have confidence. The General Government should have control over all, so that should trouble arise they would be available as United States volunteers.

The regiments in seacoast States should be instructed in heavy artillery drill. The officers of the army would be only too glad to instruct them, and the United States Government would put every fort at the disposal of the National Guard for that purpose. A few officers and men of the militia know how to work a Gatling gun or a howitzer, but outside of this they know but little of the artillery arm of the service.

William H. Howard,

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IV. A PLEA FOR SOCIAL INTERESTS IN THE GUARD.

ANY attempt to introduce more of the discipline of the regular army into the National Guard may prove fatal. The lack of interest does not arise from a lax discipline, as one of the writers in *THE CENTURY* implies, but from a want of enthusiasm, which the present system fails to furnish. It is argued that if one is not inclined towards that which is strictly military, let him stay out. But how are we to maintain an interest among the companies in the small cities and villages,

where the military element is limited at best?—and such communities add no insignificant quota to the numbers of the National Guard.

The want of interest comes not from lack of a pecuniary, but a social compensation; for men, unless professionally inclined, are sure to lose interest in any consecutive line of study. There is no social coherence, chiefly because there is nothing in common beyond an irksome routine of military discipline. The monotony of such a life is the chief complaint of officers in the regular army. In the face of this it is to be expected that the young men are going to bind themselves for any length of time when the only object of it all is the display of gold and tinsel twice a year? Under the present system this is the limit of outdoor display that our small city companies receive. If we expect the private to take an interest in smoothing the rough places in his manoeuvres, he must be given frequent chances to parade his achievements. For instance, let the regiments which are composed of companies from neighboring cities hold a monthly regimental drill, alternating between the cities from which the regiment is made up. This would engender a friendly rivalry, which would stimulate the pride, ambition, and military zeal of the communities from which they are drawn.

I have asserted that the social as well as the military interest must be kept up; this can be done by giving such aid as will not only stimulate present interest, but be a guaranty of the company's future existence.

An individual allowance of twenty-five dollars per annum for attendance at drill—this would be the smallest amount that could be called an inducement—would in five years, counting fifty men to a company, build an armory suitable for all the purposes of military and social entertainment. The drill-room should be constructed not only for use as the school of the company, but also for musical, dramatic, and literary entertainment as well. In every town of any importance can be found a club-room for the older generations: the pride that is taken in it, and the fraternal feeling that it engenders, suggest that if the members of the National Guard had some such feature in connection with their military work, the bond of mutual fellowship would be strengthened.

Another feature in inducing the National Guardsman to fill out his enlistment would be a suitable reward for services faithfully rendered. Now, beyond his discharge-papers, the private has nothing to show that he has been a member of the National Guard. Surely the young men who pledge five years to the service of their Government are entitled to something more than the distinction they may have found during their enlistment. Their hearts and their hands have been enlisted for their country's safety, and though their military experience may have been more an imitation of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" than an actual contact with the stern realities of the field of battle, yet their patriotism, if not their deeds, entitles them to a badge of honor.

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V. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

I HAVE read with great interest the articles on "Our National Military System."

The National Guardsman takes an oath to go, even at the risk of his life, wherever and whenever called during a period of from three to five years. In most cases he has to pay for the privilege. This should not be so. All military expenses should be met by the State and the United States governments. If the National Guardsmen choose to give a ball on other than drill nights—why, those who dance must pay the piper.

The National Guard should be a *national* and not merely a State guard, and, as suggested by Major Brush in THE CENTURY, should take oath to support the General as well as the State government. I am quite sure this is the case in Pennsylvania.

While it is true that for mere instruction purposes a regimental camp is best, as President Wingate says, still I should attach great value to the *esprit de corps* that can only be evoked by the massing of large bodies of troops. Will it not be found best to alternate regimental with brigade or division camps, as is done in Pennsylvania?

Would it not be feasible to have United States Regular troops participate in brigade encampments with State troops, to set a soldierly example?

The National Guard while in camp should be paid from \$1.50 per day for privates, to say \$20 for colonels, to make it possible for valuable men to stay in the service.

Adjutant-General Drum, of the Regular Army, suggests, in his report for 1887, that the Government would be willing to spare "young officers, during the winter, to aid in the instruction." Could not the Government spare officers of at least six or eight years' service, and for not less than two years continuously? I would suggest the proportion of one officer to fifty companies, which should form a brigade. This proportion would allow him to spend at least five drills a year with each company, and the advantage in the way of uniformity will be conceded. He should have appropriate rank in the State organization, his pay should be divided between the State and General governments, and he should report to both the State and United States military organizations.

Could not the National Guard be more exercised in day marching, skirmishing through rough country, and intrenching itself at night? Along with this would go signal-practice; guard and picket duty would become more real, and an extra corps of surgeons or experienced officers should be on hand to make it learn how to take care of itself.

Artillery should receive more attention, and that with modern breech-loading guns and machine guns. New York has, I believe, taken a good step in instruction with heavy artillery. This example should be followed wherever the guns afford a chance.

I like General Kautz's suggestions, and believe they ought to be carried into effect on the part of the United States Army, and also that more should be done in and by the National Guard.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

W. J. Gregory.

VI. ANNUAL COST OF A NATIONAL GUARDSMAN.

THE following articles of uniform and equipment, with prices, are enumerated in the United States Army list. The amount of uniform given is sufficient for a five-years' enlistment. Most of the equipments would last through two or three enlistments, and on the other

hand, in case of much actual service, the amount allowed for uniform would not be sufficient.

<i>Uniform.</i>		<i>Equipment.</i>	
Helmet.....	\$1.64	Springfield rifle and bayonet.....	\$13.12
Cap.....	.59	Waist-belt.....	.54
Dress-coat.....	6.99	Cartridge-box.....	1.22
Blouse.....	3.68	Bayonet-sabbard.....	.90
Trousers, 2 prs.....	7.94	Gun-sling.....	.36
Shoes, 2 prs.....	4.84	Blanket-bag.....	2.29
Overcoat.....	10.36	Haversack.....	1.44
Flannel shirts (2).....	4.66	Canteen, meal-can, cup, knife, fork.....	.51
Berlin gloves, 12 prs....	1.32	Woolen blanket.....	4.30
		Rubber blanket.....	1.13
	\$42.02		\$25.81
Total uniform and equipment.....			\$67.83

Linen and underwear same as worn in civil life.

From the foregoing table it will be seen that it would cost \$67.83 to clothe and equip a soldier. Each year he should be allowed fifty dollars for attending armory drills; twenty dollars pay and four dollars subsistence for a ten-days' camp tour. Add to this four dollars for his percentage of the cost of camp equipage and transportation. The total cost for five years (one enlistment) would be \$457.83. Armory, target practice, and incidental expenses would increase these figures; but it is believed that five hundred dollars would cover the ground—making an annual expense of one hundred dollars per man.

General A. V. Kautz has stated in *THE CENTURY* that "the annual cost per man of maintaining our military establishment is about twelve hundred dollars." That statement refers to the regular army, and in comparing it with the figures given in this article it is to be remembered that a National Guardsman, unlike a regular soldier, wears a uniform at stated periods only and sustains himself, except during a short annual encampment. I have not considered the cost of maintaining the administrative departments or of officering the National Guardsman. There is no way of getting at this with any degree of accuracy by estimating from the military expenditure of the different States, but it is believed that one hundred dollars more per annum would cover everything, including the increased expense of maintaining cavalry and artillery, and thus make the annual cost of a National Guardsman two hundred dollars.

The National Government is now spending annually upon the National Guard about four dollars per man. Each State maintains its own National Guard,—the four dollars from the Government helping that much,—and the efficiency of the National Guard depends largely upon the liberality of the State.

In order to make the National Guard uniformly efficient it should be under the pay and control of the General Government. The time has come to do away with State militia and to have United States militia or a National Guard in fact.

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Railway Relief Associations.

PERMANENCE in his position and probability of promotion are what the railroad employee is now virtually guaranteed. Were he equally as well assured of assistance during sickness, disablement, or superannuation,

and for his family at his death, his condition as a wage-earner could not be improved.

It cannot be denied that the average employee considers the railroad officer a cold-blooded machine whose sole duty it is to get as much work out of the men as possible and to save the dollars whenever he can. And it has become the rule that when one of the rank and file receives an injury while in the discharge of his duty, and he himself is to blame, he makes no request for aid except from his benevolent association if he belongs to one; if not, the hat is passed around for him.

So then, because railroad companies have adopted no system of relief for their sick and disabled employees, benevolent associations and mutual aid societies were started among them. Originally these societies and brotherhoods were formed for benevolent purposes. Had the managers been allowed to appropriate the funds of the company to assist to a reasonable extent the disabled employee, many of these associations would not have been formed, or if formed would now be under some control by the railroad company. The enforced lack of interest of the managers in the condition of their employees was one main reason why a fighting by-law for self-protection was added to the benevolent by-laws of those associations. Strikes have followed and much loss of money and loss of friendship on both sides have resulted, which might in nearly every case have been prevented had the corporations forestalled the employees by adopting and putting in force some system of relief.

Many of these relief associations among railway employees are of long standing, and were organized during periods of rapid railway development when the financial resources of the companies were taxed to the utmost to pay not only interest but operating expenses. Any increase in expenses in the way of contributions for the physical relief of employees was naturally looked upon with disfavor, especially by the managers of those roads whose ownership was continually changing hands; and, besides, a large percentage of employees was changing from one road to another as they could better their condition in the matter of wages and location. This was also the case, but to a less degree, with certain grades of officers. It has only been during the last few years that the tramp element among employees has become reduced to a minimum, and the feeling of permanence in their situations has taken strong hold upon the others.

Seeing as we do the many lines in the country grouped into large systems whose ownership will no doubt remain stable in years to come, permanence of employment and stability of position is easy to be guaranteed, and the corporations can now better secure their own rights and strengthen themselves against the encroachments of the public by drawing their employees more closely to them, showing that paternal care and solicitude for them which tend to establish good feeling and community of interest.

Relief associations under the guidance of the companies will do this. They are flourishing on the Baltimore & Ohio and the Pennsylvania railroads. The organizations on those roads may be taken as the type of what other companies should do. On the former, the scheme originated with the elder Garrett nearly ten years ago. At its organization all employees could join without regard to age. After a short period those over forty-