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**Address of Col. William L. Curry of Columbus, Ohio, 1915**

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Address of Col. William L.  
Curry, of Columbus, Ohio  
First Ohio Cavalry

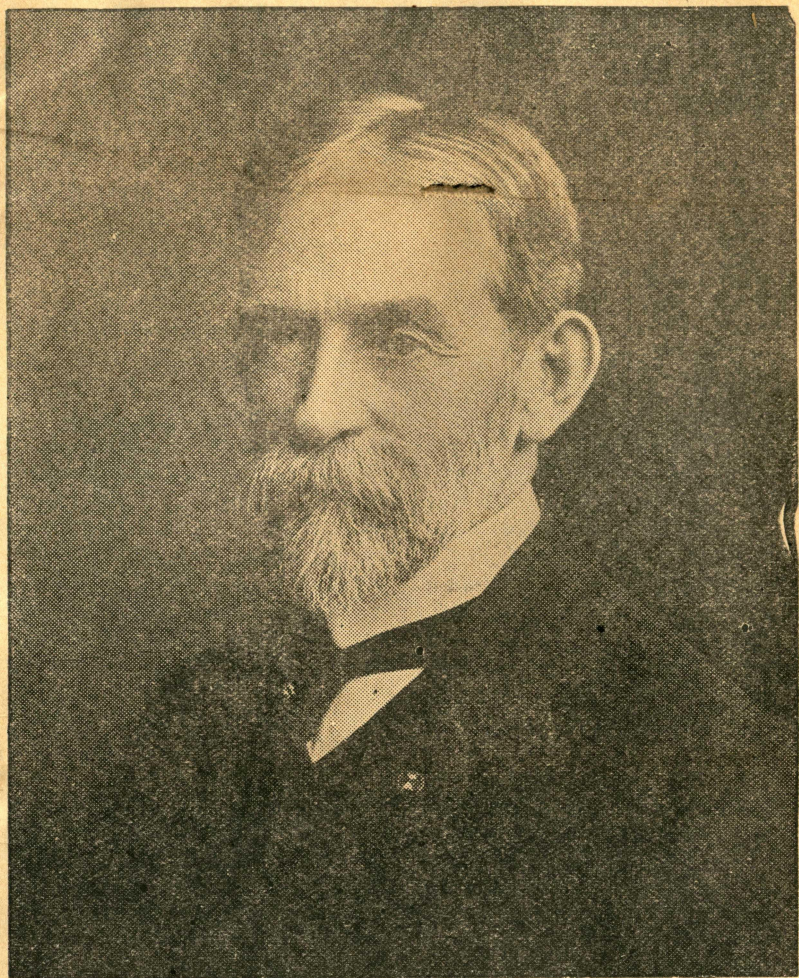


Delivered at the Reunion of the Washington  
County Veteran Association, Held in Marietta,  
:-: Ohio, October 13, 14, 15, 1915 :-:









COL. WILLIAM L. CURRY







# Address of Col. William L. Curry

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Comrades, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Washington county has state-wide reputation for patriotic service of her citizens in all of our wars, from the Revolution to the Spanish-American war, and it may be truly said there is no more patriotic community in the state of Ohio than Marietta.

This is historic ground. Many of the early settlers of this section of the state served in the war of the Revolution. As shown by the census of 1840, of the survivors of that war, as published by the War Department, there were sixteen Revolutionary soldiers living in Washington county at that date. Many cavaliers, the pride of Virginia, and the round heads of the New England colonies, after the close of the war of the Revolution, crossed the Ohio river and with bible, ax and rifle prayed, labored and fought their way through the forests, across the rivers and settled along the fertile valleys of the great Northwest Territory.

Virginia builded greater than she thought when she ceded the lands between the Ohio and the Miami rivers to the new and bankrupt republic, with the stipulation that these lands were to be given to her sons who had fought so valiantly during the war for independence, as part pay for their services in the Continental army.

The beautiful valleys along these rivers were largely settled by the

hardy pioneers who had served in the Revolution and legions of their descendants still reside along these historic streams, who have always been in the forefront in all things pertaining to the advancement of civilization. From their ranks have come many of the statesmen, governors, presidents and the great soldiers in all of our wars.

Pride of ancestry is commendable, for the heroes of '76 left us a noble heritage. Though kinship may be removed by many generations, blood will tell when opportunity comes.

The patriotic blood that inspired the men of the Revolution does not become cold by intervening years, and the spirit that inspired them during the dark days of the struggle for independence has inspired their descendants to fight the battles of all our wars in which they have taken so prominent a part.

In all the world's history, from the sacrifice on the cross, the greatest revolutions for liberty and equality of mankind have been accomplished by suffering and spilling of blood. The Declaration of Independence would not have been of any avail had it not been for the soldiers of the Continental Army with their deer rifles, flint locks, powder horns and bullets driving the British hordes from our shores. Neither would the Emancipation Proc-



lamation, penned by the immortal Lincoln, have freed a single slave had it not been for the Union Army with its lines of steel.

It is an old saying that "a prophet is not without honor except in his own country," and while statistics are dry, "lest we forget" it is well now and then to indulge briefly in statistics to recall the service and sacrifices of our fellow citizens, and the part they played in the great drama of the Civil War. There were 2,778,304 enlistments in the Union Army during that war, and the losses: killed, 110,070; wounded and treated in hospitals, 275,175; total deaths, 359,528. Ohio sent to the field during the war 313,180 men, and the total enlistments were near 340,000, as many soldiers enlisted two or three times. And what was Ohio's contribution to the great sacrifice of life during the war?

Killed .....	11,588
Died of wounds and disease...	23,887
Total deaths.....	35,475
Total casualties.....	178,213

The casualties in Ohio troops were about one in five of all the troops furnished.

What was Washington county's contribution to that great army that carried our flag to victory on many hard contested battle fields? As shown by the official records, 4,065 of your boys served in the Union Army, represented in about 200 regiments, batteries and other organizations. The losses by death were almost 600, and some of them fought on almost every great battle field of the war. You are to be congratulated on the invaluable roster

and record of the service of the soldiers of the county, as compiled by Lieutenant Charles H. Newton, one of your own citizens and a veteran of long and honorable service in the 2nd O. H. A. It may be well doubted that there is so complete a roster in any other county of the state.

The smoke was still hanging over the battered walls of Fort Sumter when the first call was made for volunteers, April 14, 1861, by President Lincoln, and your citizens were among the first to respond to that call. After more than fifty-four years since the commencement of the Civil War and a large majority of the boys who responded to that call have answered their last roll call on earth and joined the great majority, it will be a revelation to the younger generations who may not have kept in touch with local history, to recall the great services of the soldiers who enlisted from this county. While time will not permit going into details by naming all the organizations in which they served, it will be of interest to mention the regiments which were largely represented by enlistments of your boys with losses by death, as the large number of casualties in the regiments represented is the best evidence of the dangerous service rendered.

The first company from this county offered their services April 15th and left Marietta April 22nd, under Captain Frank Buell, and was assigned as Company "B," 18th Regiment O. V. I. Another company soon followed under Captain John Henderson, of Beverly,



and was assigned to the same regiment as Company "K."

Washington county was awakened to the danger of the hour. The rattling drum and the tread of marching soldiers were heard in every town and hamlet of the county. A proclamation was issued by Mayor Nye for citizens to prepare for defense. The iron cannons were put in readiness and solid shot was cast at the Nye foundry. The people thought of nothing else, talked of nothing but the duty of the hour. This is ancient history to the veterans and the older generation, but it is well worth repeating to the younger generation and furnishes a lesson in patriotism which should never be forgotten.

This historic city, located on the border, with only the Ohio river separating it from one of the southern states, was a very important military center from the beginning to the close of the war and many thousand soldiers rendezvoused here and crossed the river into the state in rebellion.

As shown by the records your patriotic citizens filled every quota from the first to the last call for volunteers.

Among the organizations largely represented by enlistments in the county, I have compiled from the official records losses by death. Perhaps in other organizations not so largely represented the losses were just as great, but those mentioned will suffice to show that the soldiers of the county served in fighting organizations.

#### Losses in Cavalry.

First Ohio Cavalry.....	204
Seventh Ohio Cavalry.....	201
Ninth Ohio Cavalry.....	205
Second West Virginia Cavalry.....	196

#### Infantry.

Eighteenth O. V. I.....	184
Twelfth O. V. I.....	175
Twenty-fifth O. V. I.....	280
Thirty-sixth O. V. I.....	303
Thirty-ninth O. V. I.....	196
Sixty-third O. V. I.....	357
Seventy-third O. V. I.....	321
Seventy-seventh O. V. I.....	280
Ninety-second O. V. I.....	244
One hundred and sixteenth O. V. I.....	185

#### Artillery.

First Ohio Light Artillery.....	387
Second Ohio Heavy Artillery.....	176
West Virginia Light Artillery.....	164

In addition to the rank and file, who carried the musket, carbine and sabre, manned the guns in the artillery, built the breastworks and won the battles, you had some officers of high rank and distinguished service. Major General Don Carlos Buell, who commanded the Army of the Ohio at the battle of Shiloh; Brig. Gen. T. C. H. Smith, chief of staff to General Pope; Brevet Brig. Generals Rufus R. Dawes, Benjamin D. Fearing and Hiram F. Devol; Col. Melvin Clarke, 36th Ohio, killed at Antietam; Col. E. B. Andrews, 36th Ohio; Jesse Hildebrand, 77th Ohio; John C. Paxton, 2nd W. Va. Cavalry; Thomas W. Moore, 148th Ohio. Lieut. Colonels T. J. Pattin, 1st Ohio Cavalry; R. L. Curtis, 2nd W. Va. Cavalry; Dauglas Putnam, 92nd Ohio, and Isaac F. Kinkead, 148th Ohio. Brevet Lieut. Colonels Ephraim C. Dawes, Major 53rd Ohio; R. L. Nye, Captain 36th Ohio; A. W. McCormick, Captain



77th Ohio and Harrison Gray Otis, Captain 23rd Ohio; Major J<sup>W</sup>ett Palmer, 36th Ohio; John W<sup>illiamson</sup>, 9th Ohio Cavalry; Brevet Major F. H. Loring, Captain 92nd Ohio, and a score of others whose names I do not now recall, nearly all of whom have passed to their rewards.

After the surrender of the Confederates, 31,000 at Vicksburg and the great battles of Gettysburg and Chickamauga in 1863, came the veteran re-enlistment for the soldiers who went to the front in 1861. Many of the soldiers who went into the service at the first call for three years' service re-enlisted for "three years more, or during the war." The provision was that they had served more than two years and the greatest inducement was a furlough for thirty days. This gave a new inspiration to the recruiting service, as these veterans had two years of hard service and with a patriotic devotion to the Union cause renewed their allegiance to the flag to the end. Many of the old regiments whose ranks had been depleted by the ravages of the war were recruited to their full strength and returned to the front in the early spring of 1864. Under this call upward of 20,000 Ohio soldiers re-enlisted and from this county 2,932, which it is claimed is the greatest number from any county in the state excepting Hamilton.

Some of your boys were at Gettysburg, where 43,000 boys of North and South fell in two days; they were at Chickamauga, where 35,000 boys fell in two days; they were at Shiloh,

Stone River, Cheat Mountain, Port Republic, Antietam, Vicksburg and many of the battle fields of Virginia; they were in the "One Hundred Days under fire from Chattanooga to Atlanta." Some of them marched with Sherman to the sea, and others were at Appomattox at the surrender of Lee's army. This is the true story of the service of the soldiers of this county. As you meet, tonight, my comrades, what memories of those stirring times come trooping thick and fast. The days from 1861 to 1865 when you were in camp, or the march or on the battle line.

You marched forth with bright new banners, waving in the sunlight, with fathers, mothers, wives, sisters and sweethearts cheering you mid blare of trumpets and rattling drums. But when you returned after four years of war, the scene was changed. Your ranks were broken; your banners were blackened with the smoke of battle; your once bright blue uniforms were faded by the southern sun and you were sun bronzed heroes of many a hard fought battle field. Such was the history of every company that went forth from this patriotic county. Yours was a patriotic community and there was scarcely an old family of this vicinity that was not represented in that great struggle.

In the Spanish war, soldiers served in the Seventh Regiment of Ohio Infantry, also members of staff corps and other organizations. I am glad to have the opportunity to pay this slight tribute to the services of your sol-



diers that their descendants, friends and neighbors may know what your contribution was to the armies that fought the battles of our country from the Revolution to the Spanish-American war. It matters not in what war your boys fought; they all fought under the same flag and are entitled to the same meed of praise and honor. The soldiers of the war with Spain were of the same blood as the soldiers of the Civil War and some of them were your sons. They had the example of your heroic deeds to inspire them, they were proud of your services and gloried in the victories you had won. They stormed the Spanish forts of El Caney and San Juan Hill; crushed the insurrections in the Philippine Islands and swept the Spanish fleet from Manila Bay. Could we look into the future with prophetic eye we would see the heroes of the Revolution, the war of 1812, the war with Mexico, the soldiers of the Civil War, who saved the Union, and the young soldiers of the Spanish-American war, all crossing swords in the morning sunlight under the flag which has given us all the hope and promise of the future. These heroes were your citizens and they have left you a good heritage in which you can take a just pride.

During the war Ohio furnished a larger number of distinguished generals than any other state in the Union. The total number of generals furnished by Ohio during the war was 227, divided by rank as follows: Major Generals, 20; Brevet Major Generals, 27; Brigadier Generals, 30; Brevet

Brigadier Generals, 150. In this number were some whose military fame was known and praised throughout the whole of the civilized world, and it may be well doubted if there was an officer of any of the European countries that stood as high as a military leader as did General Grant at the close of the war; and it is a fact and rather remarkable, that the only officers that have ever attained the rank of general, excepting Washington, were Grant, Sherman and Sheridan, all Ohio soldiers. Grant was commissioned lieutenant general March 2, 1864, and held that rank until July 25, 1866, when he was promoted to general and was succeeded by William T. Sherman, who became a general in full March 4, 1869, upon Grant's election to the presidency. Phillip H. Sheridan was promoted to lieutenant general and held that rank until June 1, 1888, when he was promoted to full general. He died August 5, 1888. The act promoting Sheridan to the rank of general provided that the rank should end with the life of General Sheridan. Grant, Sherman and Sheridan may well be named "Ohio's Immortal Trinity."

No chivalrous soldier would forgive me did I not speak a word for those whom the soldier never forgot and were ever in his memory when at the front. Need I say that I refer to the mothers, wives and sweethearts of the Union soldiers. It was not given to you, silent martyrs of the war, to fall in battle, but yours was a harder lot.

Those whom you loved better than life were exposed to danger, but you



could only hope and pray. You trembled at every battle, yet hoped your soldier was at the front. You hardly dared hope he would escape such imminent danger, and yet you would have scorned the temptation to him to have tried to avoid it. You wished him to be the bravest of the brave or he would not have been worthy of your love. And while your tender heart trembled constantly at his danger, yet you constantly rejoiced at his valor. He was brave because you willed it; he was tender, generous and chivalrous because he was born of woman. It was for you that valor became a virtue and it was for your sake he dared not do otherwise than be brave. It was your prayers and messages to him that made him steadfast, and your love that made him invincible. And so it was always, that much as you loved us, you were through all the long and bloody years of the war, fearless and unconquered for us. With your prayers we went to the field, mourned by your tears our comrade fell and we returned victorious to receive your blessing. You suffered for every shot that struck a loved one, but could not lose your pain in the excitement of the charge or a heroic death. You wrote letters of cheer and comfort, scraped lint, nursed the sick and wounded, prayed with and consoled the dying and buried the friendless dead; did all you could and then folded your hands and trusted in God to bring your darling home, or to have him die with honor on the field.

As we meet in reunions and camp

fires, there are some sweet memories and some sad memories. Sad memories as we think of our comrades who fell on the field or died in prison pens while we have been spared half a century to enjoy the blessings of our great country for which they died. Sweet memories of our comradeship on the march and in camp as we sat around the flickering camp fires and sang the old songs. The music that inspires soldiers during the war is not confined to the shrill fife, the rattling drum and thrilling bugle. While many a soldier on the weary march, almost ready to drop from exhaustion, has been cheered and enthused by drum and bugle, yet the old patriotic war songs sung in camp and on the march, served as a tonic that buoyed the soldier up to new effort when overcome by hunger and fatigue.

Some writer has said: "Let me write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes the laws." In times of war it is remarkable what an influence music has upon the soldiers. The Russians chant their hymns as they are led to battle, as did the Boers in the recent war with England. The French army marches to battle singing the Marseillaise hymn. The Germans sing "The Watch on the Rhine," while the Englishman is wild with enthusiasm when he hears "God Save the Queen." The soldiers of the Union army during the Civil War were cheered when in camp, on the march and on the battle line by many war songs which still touch a chord in the memory of every soldier and patriotic citizen.



In the great crises of a nation, men seem to be born for any emergency; not only great generals are produced to lead the armies in case of war, but men great in oratory, literature and poetry come from all walks of life. So it was when the Civil War began. Generals, orators, men of literary genius and poets were ready to take their places as actors in the great drama of the sanguinary struggle to follow.

In the beginning we had few patriotic songs that appealed to our people, both old and young. Following the attempt of John Brown to arouse the whole nation by inciting an uprising of the slaves at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, came the song echoing all over the Northland, "John Brown's Body Lies Mouldering in the Grave and His Soul Goes Marching On." The melody of this old song had the right rhythm and swing for marching, and it was sung by the soldiers more than any other song during the war. How well the thrill of these old songs is remembered by the veterans of the war, and the wives, the sisters and any of the fathers or mothers who may yet survive.

The smoke had scarcely risen from the battered walls of Fort Sumter when all over the land was heard "Hail Columbia," "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "The Red, White and Blue" and "The Star Spangled Banner."

"Oh say, can you see by the dawn's early light,

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?

Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,

O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming;  
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there."

The rattle of the war drums and the sharp ringing notes of the bugle were heard in every village, hamlet and city, and the boys were marching away gaily with measured step to the wild music.

Then came "Rally 'Round the Flag" ringing from every hilltop through every valley in the North. It was written by George F. Root and sung by every man, woman and child as their fathers, husbands, brothers and sweethearts marched away.

"Yes, we'll rally 'round the flag, boys,  
We'll rally once again,  
Shouting the battle cry of freedom."

I remember most vividly the first time I heard that inspiring song. I had been taken prisoner and was on parole at Camp Chase in the autumn of 1862. Happening in the city of Columbus one evening, I was attracted to the old Buckeye Hotel, located where the Chamber of Commerce now stands, by sounds of merrymaking in that historic old hostelry. There I found some of my young friends celebrating in their new uniforms, as a number of them had just been promoted to lieutenantcies in their several regiments. They were singing "Rally 'Round the Flag" with great enthusiasm and it was very inspiring. I joined the chorus and we marched out Broad street to High and down High to Town and back again, singing as we marched, followed by a great



crowd—even the policemen who always looked askance at soldiers making a noise on the streets, joined in march and shouts of applause.

When the call was issued by President Lincoln for 300,000 men, there came another song so appropriate, written by J. S. Adams:

We are coming, Father Abr'am, three  
hundred thousand more,  
From Mississippi's winding stream  
and from New England's shore;  
We leave our plow and workshops, our  
wives and children dear,  
With heart too full for utterance, with  
but a silent tear;  
We dare not look behind us, but steadfastly  
before.  
We are coming, Father Abr'am, three  
hundred thousand more.

Three hundred thousand more were singing "Tenting Tonight," written by Walter Kittridge, a New England soldier.

"Many are the hearts that are weary,  
tonight,  
Wishing for the war to cease.  
Many are the hearts looking for the  
right  
To see the dawn of peace.  
Tenting tonight, tenting tonight,  
Tenting on the old camp ground."

While the carnage of war was still raging, there came that pathetic, homesick song by George F. Root, sung by the boys around the camp fires on the eve of battle, when the lines were forming:

"Just before the battle, Mother,  
I am thinking most of you,  
While upon the field we're watching,  
With the enemy in view.  
Comrades brave around me lying,  
Filled with thoughts of home and  
God;

For well they know that on the morrow

Some will sleep beneath the sod."

The battle had ended and many of the boys had fallen in the wild charge. Those who survived wrote to the dear ones in the Northland the sad tidings of suffering and death and then could be heard softly and sweetly wafted through the waving pines:

"We shall meet, but we shall miss him,  
There will be one vacant chair;  
We shall linger to caress him,  
While we breathe our evening  
prayer.  
When a year ago we gathered,  
Joy was in his mild blue eye,  
But a golden cord is severed  
And our hopes in ruin lie."

The most inspiring poem of the war was "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," written by Julia Ward Howe. It is related that she spent an evening in the camps along the Potomac river; returning to her home, she awakened before daybreak and in the dawn wrote that wonderful poem in an hour.

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the  
coming of the Lord;  
He is tramping out the vintage where  
the grapes of wrath are stored;  
He has loosed the fateful lightning of  
His terrible swift sword;  
His truth is marching on."  
"In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was  
born across the sea,  
With a glory in His bosom that trans-  
figures you and me,  
As He died to make men holy, let us  
die to make men free,  
While God is marching on."

During the great battle summer of 1864, when the Army of the Potomac under Grant was fighting through the Wilderness and Sherman's army was driving the Confederates through the



mountain passes and across the rivers of Northern Georgia, there came from the prison pens that song of hope and confidence:

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching,

Cheer up, comrades, they will come,  
And beneath the starry flag

We will breathe the air again

Of the freeland in our beloved home.

There were many other war songs, among which may be named "Brave Battery Boys," "Kingdom Coming," "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," and a few other pathetic songs.

Col. Charles G. Halpine, whose non-deplume was Miles O'Riley, wrote "We Drank From the Same Canteen": "It was sometimes water and sometimes milk,

And sometimes apple-jack fine as silk.  
But whatever the tipples had been,  
We shared it together in bane and bliss,

And I warm to you, my friends, as I think of this,

We drank from the same canteen."

More than fifty years have passed since the last shot of the great war was fired. Fifty years ago the battle flags, which you carried to victory on many hard contested battle fields were furled, the muskets stacked, the sabers sheathed, the artillery parked and the old faded uniforms of blue were doffed. What mighty changes since that memorable time, on the historic battle fields, along the rivers, valleys and mountain passes, where you fought. The cotton grows along the historic valleys where greater and braver armies than were ever marshalled by Napoleon met in their great

struggle. The corn waves over the fields where the charging columns surged, battle flags waved and thousands died. Now the children play beside ruined mounds that were once heroic monuments to human valor, as American met American. Peace hangs like a benediction over the great battle fields and the soft southern sky casts a tender banner of azure as if to embrace the spot where thousands of heroes of the Blue and Gray lie in their last sleep. Flowers bloom along the trenches, the birds sing and all nature seems to chant "Peace and good will to men."

One parting word, my comrades, one and all. You are veterans in age as well as service now. Your heads are graying, your steps faltering, your ranks are thinning and death, the great recruiting officer, is rapidly calling you to the ranks of the comrades on the other side. Veterans of the Great March, you are steadily tramping behind an unfailling leader to the shoreless sea. Gray and grizzled soldiers who held with undying grip the heights of Gettysburg on that terrible but immortal day. You, who with mighty sweep stormed Lookout Mountain and planted your banners among the stars. He who charged through the pines at Chickamauga with Pap Thomas, and the bristling forts at Vicksburg, shall soon storm the gates of death and be crowned with immortal honors. Then, my comrades, when the last hour has come to us all, when we have been mustered out by the Great Captain of all armies, when no loud reveille shall call us again to the



stern battle of life, when the last tattoo is beaten, when the bugle shall sound "taps" and lights out forever, shall we be worthy to join the immortal ranks of the comrades on the other side, when time and earth and hostile armies are no more.

Salute the flag and farewell.

#### Addenda.

As some of you may be aware, there are only two Corps commanders of the Union Army living, Gen. Granville Dodge of the infantry and General James H. Wilson of the cavalry.

Last month the members of the First Ohio Cavalry Association held their reunion at Columbus. As secretary of the association I received a letter from General Wilson, which was highly appreciated by comrades who were present. Speaking of the war raging in Europe, he commented in a sentence or two as follows, which is well worth careful consideration, as compared with some of the newspaper scare headlines of today. He said: "No power in Europe or Asia can make war with us today. All are fully engaged." When the present titanic struggle ends, even the victor will be so improverished in numbers and resources that he couldn't make war with us immediately, even if he wished to do so. Hence we can well afford to stop, look and listen. When we know the end, we shall have ample time to decide upon our course." This from one of the great cavalry leaders who also served in the Spanish war and has kept in close touch with the great war in Europe, is a word of confidence in which we can take great comfort in these days of hysteria and

lingoism. What a change in the conduct of campaign strategy and actual fighting on the firing line from all former wars. Soldiers are maimed and killed in the trenches by the thousands without having the opportunity to see the enemy or firing a shot. No inspiration for saber charges by the cavalry or bayonet charges by the infantry, as that is the exception, not the

Death from all causes in the Union Army during the Civil War:

Killed or died of wounds—Officers, 6,365; enlisted men, 103,705; aggregate, 110,070.

Died of disease—Officers, 2,712; enlisted men, 197,008; aggregate, 199,720.

In Confederate prisons—Officers, 83; enlisted men, 24,783; aggregate, 24,866.

Accidents—Officers, 142; enlisted men, 3,972; aggregate, 4,114.

Drowning—Officers, 106; enlisted men, 4,838; aggregate, 4,944.

Sunstrokes—Officers, 5; enlisted men, 308; aggregate, 313.

Murdered—Officers, 37; enlisted men, 483; aggregate, 520.

Killed after capture—Officers, 14; enlisted men, 90; aggregate, 104.

Suicide—Officers, 26; enlisted men, 365; aggregate, 391.

Military executions—Enlisted men, 267; aggregate, 267.

Executed by the enemy—Officers, 4; enlisted men, 60; aggregate, 64.

Causes known, but unclassified—Officers, 62; enlisted men, 1,972; aggregate, 2,034.

Cause not stated—Officers, 28; enlisted men, 12,093; aggregate, 12,121.

Aggregate—Officers, 9,584; enlisted men, 394,944; total loss, 359,528.



