48TH CONGRESS, 1st Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { REPORT No. 1507.

LUCY LE G. JEFFERS.

MAY 7, 1884.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. STRUBLE, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 3661.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3661) granting a pension to Lucy Le G. Jeffers, widow of the late Commodore William N. Jeffers, respectfully report:

That Commodore Jeffers was born in New Jersey, and entered the Navy as an acting midshipman September 25, 1840. After serving in various vessels on the Atlantic coast, he was, in 1841, ordered to the frigate United States, and participated in the capture of Upper California by the forces commanded by Commodore Ap Catesby Jones. After serving on the Pacific and the Brazil squadrons for four years he was ordered to the Naval Academy, which had just been organized at Annapolis, Md. He graduated number four in his class, and was, at the outbreak of the Mexican war, ordered to the steamer Vixen. On her he served throughout the war, participating in the attacks on the forts of Alvarado, under Commodore Conner; in the two attacks on, and the capture of, Tobasco, under Commodore Perry, in the capture of Tuspan, of Coatzacoalco, and Laguna de Terminos, and in the siege and capture of Vera Cruz and the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa. After the Mexican war he was stationed a year at the Naval Academy as instructor of mathematics, and then actively employed at sea on one of the vessels of the Coast Survey, and afterwards was granted leave of absence to serve on, and to command, mail steamers in the American line plying between New York and the ports of the Gulf of Mexico. In 1852 he was selected by Commodore Perry to be one of the officers of the Japan Expedition, and was assigned to the Princton, but as that vessel proved unfitted for that service he obtained permission to join the expedition fitted out by E. G. Squier to explore the state of Honduras.

In 1853 he was ordered to the Brazilian squadron, where, owing to his self-acquired efficiency, he was placed in command of the surveying steamer Water Witch, and engaged in the exploration of the Rio de la Plata. While thus employed he was fired upon by a Paraguayan battery, and though lightly armed he gallantly engaged and finally silenced the battery. This hostile act led to the famous Paraguayan expedition, under Commodore Shubrick, which extorted an apology for the insult to the flag.

While in command of the Water Witch he rescued from wreck, with great risk and exertion, the Spanish war steamer Carthagena, for which

AUTHENTICATED U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO

service he was permitted by Congress to receive the thanks of the Queen of Spain, accompanied by a sword of honor.

In 1857 he obtained a second leave, and made the preliminary survey of the Isthmus of Honduras for an interoceanic railway. In 1858 he was ordered to the gunnery ship Portsmouth, stationed in the Gulf to protect the American flag during the "right-of-search" dispute with Great Britain, and for the succeeding two years served on several vessels of the Gulf squadron, and while attached to the Brooklyn made a survey of Chiriqui, and was selected by the United States Government as a commissioner to report on the Chiriqui grants and pass on their value.

At the outbreak of the civil war he was at his home on sick leave, but immediately applied for active service, and was ordered to take charge of the ordnance department at the Norfolk navy-yard. He left his bed for this important duty, but before he reached his post the navy-yard was destroyed. He was then placed in command of the steamer Philadelphia, and detailed to keep the Potomac open. He then served for seven months on the frigate Roanoke, in the engagements with the batteries on Sewell's Bluff and on the blockade off Charleston. In December, 1861, he was ordered to command the steamer Underwriter, and participated in the battles of Roanoke Island, Elizabeth City, and numerous smaller affairs, under Commodore Goldsborough and Commander Rowan. In March, 1862, after Lieutenant Worden was disabled, he was notably distinguished above the other lieutenants on the list by being assigned to the command of the Monitor, and in her joined in the several bombardments and engagements at Drury's Bluff under Commander John Rodgers.

His health then forbidding further active service at sea he was, in September, 1862, placed in charge of the ordnance department at the Philadelphia navy-yard, and in 1863 was transferred to the Washington navy-yard, where, in connection with Dahlgren, and as his successor, he rendered most valuable service to the country in the manufacture and the improvement of the naval ordnanee.

In 1865 he was ordered to command the Swatara, and for three years served in the Mediterranean, African, and West Indian stations. In 1870 he was commissioned captain and assigned duty as assistant to the Chief of Bureau of Ordnance; a year later he was given the command of the gunnery practice-ship Constellation, and in April, 1873, was confirmed by the Senate as Chief of Bureau of Ordnance. This important post he held for two terms, eight years, and his eminent qualifications enabled him to render still further extremely useful service to the Navy. Though it was not then the policy of the Government to spend large sums for the improvement of ordnance material, he constantly endeavored with the means under his control to improve the *personnel* and the *materiel* of his department, and to make ready for the day when advance would be demanded. During his eight years in this office he disbursed over $4,000,000 without even a charge of misappropriation. On leaving the Bureau he was sent to Europe to observe and report upon the progress of foreign powers in naval armament.

In the early part of 1883 he was offered the command of the Asiatic squadron, at a time when the impending difficulties between France and China made this the most important of the naval stations of the United States. To his great regret he was forced to decline this command by reason of his physical infirmities, which, contracted by exposure in younger days, and fought through many years with an energy of will rarely posssessed, finally overcame him, forced him to return to

the United States, where, after a few months, his career of great usefulness terminated with his death.

Commodore Jeffers died poor, leaving a wife, daughter, and granddaughter, the last two of whom having for some considerable time before his death been dependent upon him because of certain domestic misfortunes, not necessary, in the judgment of your committee, to recite.

Mrs. Jeffers is now drawing a pension of $25 per month, with which to support herself and contribute to the support of her daughter and granddaughter. She is poor and has no property. The pension received is that of a lieutenant's widow, although her husband had been four times promoted to higher grades. When he died he was at the head of the list of commodores, the grade corresponding to that of brigadier-general in the Army.

Congress has in the past frequently granted such increase of pension in similar cases, but aside and apart from this fact, in view of the great length and value of the services of Commodore Jeffers to his country your committee believe it a matter of simple honor and justice that the widow of this distinguished naval officer should receive the small increase which is asked by this bill; therefore its passage is earnestly recommended.

O