STUDY AND INVESTIGATION OF BATTLE FIELDS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR COMMEMORATIVE PURPOSES

MAY 4, 1926.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. Johnson of Indiana, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 11613]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 11613) to provide for the study and investigation of battle fields in the United States for commemorative purposes, having considered the same, report thereon with the recommendation that it do pass.

During the past several years quite a number of bills have been introduced providing for the inspection of battle fields and the establishment of national military parks. In the present session 28 bills have been introduced of which 14 provide for establishment of national military parks with appropriations authorized approximating nearly $6,000,000. The other bills provide for markers on battle fields, the inspection of sites with a view to eventual establishment of parks, etc.

Because of the number of measures introduced and the evident interest of Congress in the establishment of these military parks, your committee believes that the study and investigation called for in H. R. 11613 will be of the greatest interest and importance in determining what action should be taken by Congress. In this connection a study made in the Army War College in 1925, which was furnished to the committee at the request of the chairman, is made a part of this report for the information of the House.

THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE,
Washington Barracks, D. C., May 28, 1925.

Subject: Study of records pertaining to the battles of the United States with reference to the establishment of national military parks and national monuments.

To: The Commandant, the Army War College.

In accordance with instructions quoted in the following paragraphs, this section has made a study of records and data pertaining to certain wars in which the military forces of the United States were engaged:
The object of this study will be the compilation of two lists of such battles, arranged in order of priority, under the following heads:

(1) Those battles of such great importance and far-reaching effect as to warrant commemoration by the establishment of national military parks.

(2) Those battles sufficiently important to warrant commemoration by the acquisition of some land and the placing of a limited number of markers or monuments and the designation of the sites so obtained as national monuments.

It is the view of the War Department that national military parks should as a general thing cover a comparatively large area of ground, probably some thousands of acres, and so marked and improved as to make them into real parks available for detailed study by military authorities, the battle lines and operations being clearly indicated on the ground. The expense of maintaining such a park is so great as to indicate that the number should be kept fairly low.

Less important and extensive engagements which have nevertheless a definite military and political effect should be listed under the second category, the idea being that limited areas of ground on the site of the battle could be purchased and appropriately marked and the whole aggregation of separate areas designated as a national monument.

From the instructions it was assumed that the lists were to comprise only those battles fought within the limits of the United States and from the beginning of the Revolutionary War to the present time. The lists would therefore be confined to battles of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, Indian wars, and the Civil War.

I. THE ACTION OF CONGRESS

A preliminary study was made of acts of Congress providing for the establishment of national military parks and for otherwise commemorating the battles of past wars. It was found that these acts provided for the commemoration of battles in one of three ways:

1. By the establishment of national military parks.

2. By indicating the lines of battle by markers or monuments, or both, without establishing parks.

3. By single monuments without otherwise marking the field.

1. National military parks.—The first national military park was established by Congress in the act of April 19, 1890.

"That for the purpose of preserving and suitably marking for historical and professional military study the fields of some of the most remarkable maneuvers and most brilliant fighting in the War of the Rebellion * * * the following described highways in these States are hereby declared approaches to and parts of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga Military Park as established in the second section of this act."

The national military park established under this act consists of a main park of about 5,600 acres covering the battle field of Chickamauga, and detached areas in Wauhatchie Valley, on Lookout Mountain, on Missionary Ridge and elsewhere secured for the purpose of establishing the lines of battle on the battle field of Chattanooga.

The second national park established was that of Gettysburg. The marking of the battle lines on this field was begun under the sundry civil act of March 3, 1893, but the park itself was established under the act of February 11, 1895, which authorized the Secretary of War to accept for this purpose from the Gettysburg Memorial Association about 800 acres of ground. Since the establishment of the park it has been greatly enlarged and now covers an area of about 2,530 acres.

The third national military park established by Congress was that of Shiloh; it was established under the act of December 27, 1894.

"That in order that the armies of the Northwest which served in the Civil War, like their comrades of the eastern armies at Gettysburg and those of the Central West at Chickamauga, may have the history of one of their memorable battles preserved on the ground where they fought, the battle field of Shiloh, in the State of Tennessee is hereby declared a national military park * * *"

It will be seen from the above that these three military parks were designed by Congress not only to preserve for historical and professional study the battle fields themselves, but also to serve as lasting memorials to the great armies of the war. The field of Gettysburg was to be a memorial to the Union Army of the Potomac as well as to the Confederate Army of northern Virginia; the field of Chickamauga, a memorial to the Union Army of the Cumberland and the Confederate Army of Tennessee; and the field of Shiloh a memorial to the Union Army of the Tennessee and the Confederate armies which, under various designations, opposed it in western Tennessee and in Mississippi.
As a fitting memorial to the Union Army of the Tennessee the field of Shiloh was not so appropriate as that of Vicksburg; the campaign of Vicksburg was the most brilliant operation of that army. Some years later, therefore, the Vicksburg National Military Park was established by the act of February 21, 1899. This park has an area of about 1,300 acres, covering the siege zone about the intrenched camp of 1863.

That these national military parks might be fitting memorials to the great armies engaged and be accurately marked for historical and professional military study, a commission consisting of survivors of the opposing armies was appointed for each park to fix the location of every monument and marker on the field. The legislatures of many of the States cooperated in the work by making appropriations for monuments to mark the positions of their regiments and batteries on the field and also to serve as memorials to these regiments and batteries.

These four are the only national parks that have been established to cover battle fields of the Civil War.

It is to be noted that in the four battles marked by these four existing national military parks were represented all the corps of the Union Army but four and practically all the organizations of the Confederate Army. The four Union corps not represented in these battles were the Tenth and Eighteenth (consolidated in the latter part of the war to form the Twenty-fourth) which were on the Carolina coast, the Nineteenth, which was near the mouth of the Mississippi River, and the Twenty-third, organized in Kentucky in 1863 and later a part of the Army of the Ohio.

One small national military park has been established to commemorate one of the battles of the Revolutionary War. The history of its establishment is as follows:

By the act of February 13, 1911, the sum of $30,000 was appropriated "for the erection of a monument on the battle field of Guilford Court House * * * to commemorate the great victory won there on March 15, 1781, by the American forces commanded by Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene and in memory of Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene and the officers and soldiers who participated in the battle."

This was followed by the act of March 2, 1917:

"That in order to preserve for historical and professional military study one of the most memorable battles of the Revolutionary War, the battle field of Guilford Court House in the State of North Carolina is hereby declared to be a national military park whenever the title shall have been acquired by the United States."

"The Secretary of War is authorized to receive from the Guilford Battle Ground Co. a deed of conveyance to the United States of all lands belonging to said corporation embracing about 125 acres."

2. Marking lines of battle without establishing national military parks.—In the sundry civil act of August 19, 1890, there appeared this item:

"For the purpose of surveying, locating, and preserving the lines of battle of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia at Antietam and for marking the same and for locating and marking the position of 43 different commands of the Regular Army engaged in the battle of Antietam, and for the purchase of sites for tablets for the marking of such positions * * * $15,000."

Under this and subsequent legislation of like character the lines of the battle field of Antietam have been very satisfactorily marked without the establishment of a national military park. The lines consist of about 5 miles of improved avenues along which are (as a rule) placed the monuments and markers of the different organizations that took part in the battle. A significant indication of State policy may be seen in the fact that the State of Pennsylvania refused to erect a monument on the Antietam field for any unit already represented by a monument on the battle field of Gettysburg.

The field of Chattanooga is marked in a manner similar to that of Antietam, as the field lies outside of the main park of Chickamauga.

In this method of marking battle fields there is less latitude for locating monuments and markers than if greater areas are acquired, but it gives very satisfactory results for historical and professional military study at a much smaller expenditure of money for the purchase of land and a much smaller expenditure for maintenance.

3. Single monuments.—Single monuments have generally been erected to commemorate battles of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and Indian wars. Some of these have been erected by appropriations made by Congress to supplement funds appropriated by States or raised by patriotic associations; others have been erected by the National Government alone. Among the former class may be cited:
STUDY AND INVESTIGATION OF BATTLE FIELDS

Revolutionary War

Saratoga monument:
United States $70,000
New York State 25,000
Monument association 10,000

Princeton battle field monument:
United States 30,000
Monument association 30,000

Monmouth Court House battle field monument:
United States 20,000
New Jersey 10,000
Monmouth County 10,000

Bennington battle field monument:
United States 40,000
Vermont 15,000
New Hampshire 5,000
Massachusetts 10,000
Monument association 10,000

Moores Creek battle field monument, to repair: United States 5,000

New Orleans battle field monument, to complete: United States $25,000

Indian wars

Tippecanoe battle-field monument:
United States $12,500
Indiana 12,500

Among those erected by the United States alone may be cited:

Revolutionary War

Yorktown monument $100,000
Guilford Court House battle monument 30,000
Kings Mountain battle monument 30,000

Indian wars

Point Pleasant battle monument $10,000
Fort Recovery monument 25,000
Horseshoe battle-field monument 5,000
Fort Phil Kearny monument 500

The policy as thus outlines by acts of Congress gives an appropriate scheme for the commemoration of the battle in which the military forces of the United States have been engaged.

Class I. Battles worthy of commemoration by the establishment of national military parks. These should be battles of exceptional political and military importance and interest, whose effects were far-reaching, whose fields are worthy of preservation for detailed military and historical study, and which are suitable to serve as memorials to the armies engaged.

Class II. Battles of sufficient importance to warrant the designation of their sites as national monuments. The action of Congress and the great difference in the importance of these battles give reason for the subdivision under this class into:

Class IIa. Battles of such great military and historic interest as to warrant locating and indicating the battle lines of the forces engaged by a series of markers or tablets, but not necessarily by memorial monuments.

Class IIb. Battles of sufficient historic interest to be worthy of some form of monument, tablet, or marker to indicate the location of the battle field.

If it is deemed necessary for the protection of the markers and monuments already erected on any field of Class II battles, the ground acquired by the Government on this field might be declared a national monument. This has not been done heretofore, as the battle field of Antietam has a caretaker, and on fields where single monuments have been erected it has been the policy of the Government, as soon as they have been completed, to transfer them to some local association for care and maintenance.
II. LIST OF BATTLES

In making out the lists of battles as directed by the instructions it was decided to treat each war separately.

1. REVOLUTIONARY WAR

(a) Battles of Class I

(1) Battle of Saratoga—September 19 and October 7, 1777.

(2) Siege of Yorktown—September 28 to October 19, 1781.

The two decisive events of the Revolutionary War were the surrender of the British Army under General Burgoyne as a result of his defeat in the battles variously called Saratoga, Stillwater, Freeman’s Farm or Bemis Heights, and the surrender of the British Army under General Cornwallis as a result of the siege of Yorktown. Of the importance of these engagements there can be no doubt. Saratoga brought about the definite intervention of France in favor of the American Colonies and is listed by Creasy as one of the 15 decisive battles of the world; Yorktown ended the war. The surrender of Burgoyne is commemorated by a monument on the site where the surrender took place a few miles from the battle field. The surrender of Cornwallis is commemorated by a monument erected within his lines at Yorktown. In accordance with the scheme proposed both events would be worthy of national military parks.

(b) Battles and engagements of Class IIIb

From a list of about 400 battles, engagements, etc., given in Heitman’s Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army the following have been selected as of more than ordinary military and historic interest. There are few military events of the Revolutionary War that have not been commemorated by monuments or tablets through the efforts of patriotic societies.

9. Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776.
10. Engagement at White Plains (or Chatterton’s Hill), N. Y., October 28, 1776.
16. Battle of Brandywine, Pa., September 11, 1777.
17. Battle of Germantown, Pa., October 4, 1777.
18. Defense of Forts Clinton and Montgomery, N. Y., October 6, 1777.
20. Engagement at Quaker Hill, R. I., August 29, 1778.
23. Siege of Savannah, Ga., September 23 to October 9, 1779.

It is believed that the events on the above list not shown as having monuments or tablets may properly be so commemorated.

2. WAR OF 1812

In the War of 1812 the principal actions, within the limits of the United States in which the military forces were engaged, were of a defensive character. No battle of this war is placed in Class I.
STUDY AND INVESTIGATION OF BATTLE FIELDS

(a) Battles of Class IIa

Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815: The Battle of New Orleans is the best known of the battles of this war and more troops were engaged on that field than on any other. It was a brilliant defense by raw troops against the attack of a much larger force of highly trained troops with war experience and led by well-known British generals. As it was fought after the treaty of peace had been signed, though not confirmed, it had no effect on the general conduct or outcome of the war or on the terms of the treaty of peace. Its immediate effect was to protect New Orleans from capture and perhaps from the experiences of the National Capital.

In honor of this victory a monument has been erected; it was completed under the act of March 4, 1907, which appropriated $25,000 for this purpose. In view of the unique character of this battle it is believed that the line of defense should be located and properly marked; the battle is therefore listed in Class IIa.

(b) Battles of Class IIb

2. Fort Meigs, Ohio, April 28 to May 9, 1813.
4. North Point, Md. (Long Log Lane), September 12, 1814.
5. Plattsburg, N. Y., September 6 to 11, 1814.

3. WAR WITH MEXICO

In the Mexican War there were but two battles fought within the limits of the United States. Each battle is worthy of commemoration by some form of monument.

Battles of Class IIb

Battle of Palo Alto, Tex., May 8, 1846.
Battle of Resaca de la Palma, May 9, 1846.

4. INDIAN WARS

From the beginning of the Revolutionary War to the engagement with the Chippewa Indians in October, 1838, there were innumerable encounters with Indian tribes. Until the Mexican War these encounters took place east of the Mississippi River; thereafter, with the advance of the pioneers, they were transferred to the west of that river. According to lists prepared by The Adjutant General more than 1,000 such engagements occurred between January, 1806, and January, 1891. There were comparatively few engagements in which large forces of the United States participated, but as all these encounters are more or less intimately related to the development of the Western States and the advance westward of civilization, the most important of them are worthy of commemoration. The following list is believed to contain those of greatest historical interest and importance. Monuments have been erected to commemorate some of them.

Battles of Class IIb

4. Battle of Fallen Timbers (Miami Rapids), Ohio, August 20, 1794, by General Wayne.
6. Massacre at Fort Mims, Creek Nation, August 30, 1813.
7. Battle of Talladega, by General Jackson, November 7, 1813.
8. Battle of Tohekeka or Horseshoe Bend, Ala., March 27, 1814, by General Jackson. Monument.
9. Battle of the Wisconsin (called also Battle of the Bad Axe and Battle of the Iowa), August 2, 1832, by General Atkinson.
11. Engagement at the Withlacoochee, Fla., December 31, 1835, and near that river on February 27, 1836.
17. Attack on Modoes in lava beds, California, January and April, 1873.
18. Battle of the Rosebud River, Mont., June 17, 1876.
25. Attack on Nez Perce camp at Snake Creek, near Bear Paw Mountains, Mont., September 30, 1877.
27. Engagement at Wounded Knee Creek, S. Dak., December 29, 1890. Monument erected by Sioux.

It will be noted that a gap extending from 1837 to 1866 exists in this list. The engagements with Indians that occurred between these years have not been compiled and must be sought in the old records section of The Adjutant General's office. As this will require considerable time I shall submit later a supplementary list of engagements with Indians between these years, should any be found of sufficient importance to warrant inclusion in the list.

5. CIVIL WAR

(a) Battles of Class I

2. Battles and siege of Vicksburg, May 1 to July 4, 1863.

The following considerations governed the selection of the battles named as being entitled to be placed in Class I.

The year of 1863 may well be considered the critical or decisive year of the war and the battles listed the decisive events of that year.

The year 1862 opened very auspiciously for the Union armies, and by May the Army of the Potomac was within striking distance of Richmond, and the Armies of the Ohio and the Tennessee had compelled the Confederate armies to evacuate the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. Then, however, the Union advance was checked, and in midsummer the Confederate armies made a counter movement which carried the Army of Northern Virginia into Maryland and the armies of Tennessee and East Tennessee almost to the Ohio River. The Confederates were unable to maintain their advanced positions, retired slowly, and the year closed with the disastrous Union assaults at Fredericksburg and Chickasaw Bluffs and the practically drawn battle of Murfreesboro or Stone River. At the end of 1862 the outcome of the war was still uncertain.

The year of 1863 opened auspiciously for the Confederate armies by the defeat of the Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville in the east. In the west the Union Army of the Tennessee was meeting with one obstacle after another in its attempt to open the Mississippi River. However, in July the high hopes awakened in the Confederate States by Chancellorsville were cast down by the defeat of Gettysburg and the loss of Vicksburg and its garrison. The hopes of the Confederacy were slightly raised by the victory of their central army at Chickamauga in September, but its fate was sealed when this army, too, was defeated in the Battle of Chattanooga and forced to retreat. At the end of 1863 the outcome of the war was no longer doubtful.
STUDY AND INVESTIGATION OF BATTLE FIELDS

The struggle was prolonged through the year 1864 and into 1865, but at no time could the advance of the Union armies be checked. When attempts were made to divert the Union commanders from their objectives they ended only in disaster.

In addition to those named Shiloh has also been placed in this class by and act of Congress.

Since each of the three great Union armies, the Army of the Potomac, the Army of the Middle West (known in succession as the Army of the Ohio, Army of the Cumberland, and Army of Georgia) and the Army of Tennessee, has its national military park on the site of its most famous battle, all the other important battles of these armies are placed in Class II.

(b) Battles of Class IIa

In this class are placed battles of far-reaching importance, in which the numbers engaged and the losses sustained, or the resultant military or political effects, were so great as to warrant their inclusion. While the greater portion of these fields lies in the State of Virginia, the States of Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina are represented in the list. Should it be deemed important to preserve any one of these fields for professional military and historical study, it would be sufficient to mark the battle lines as on the field at Antietam, otherwise the battle might be commemorated as an important historical event by the erection of a single monument.

These battles are listed in chronological order, as it has been found impracticable to arrange battles fought by different armies, in different theaters, with different objectives, in a satisfactory order of importance.

4. Second Manassas or Groveton, August 30, 1862, Army of Virginia and Army of the Potomac.
8. The Wilderness, Va. May 5–9, 1864, Army of the Potomac.

(c) Battles of Class IIb

In a war covering a period of four years, fought over an extensive territory, in which there occurred over 2,000 listed battles, engagements, and sieges wherein organizations of various sizes participated, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to make a satisfactory list of all the battles and engagements that might be considered worthy of some form of monument as a memorial to the organizations and to the men who took part. It is believed, however, that a single monument should suffice to commemorate any battle or engagement not listed in Class IIb, since none can be more important in our history than some of the battles of the Revolutionary War thus commemorated, even though in the Civil War battles the forces engaged and the losses suffered were greater. Distinctions within this class—i.e., between important battles such as Franklin, Cedar Creek, Kenesaw Mountain, Champions Hill, Perryville, Pea Ridge, and smaller engagements, such as the Monocacy, Brandy Station, etc.—might fittingly be indicated by the size of the monument.

C. A. Bach, Lieutenant Colonel, Cavalry, Chief Historical Section, A. W. C.

Dwight F. Davis, Acting Secretary of War.

Approved, June 16, 1925.
The report of the War Department on H. R. 9765 and the supplemental letter suggesting the introduction of H. R. 11613 is made a part of this report as follows:

Hon. Noble Johnson,
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Sir: In compliance with your request of March 11, 1926, I am pleased to submit the following report on H. R. 9765.

The subject of the proposed legislation is the creation of a National Military Park Commission of seven members, to be appointed by the President, to make a study of all the battle fields of various wars in which the United States or the thirteen colonies have been engaged, with a view to transmitting to the President a plan for marking and commemorating every battle field within the United States.

There is no existing law on the subject. Heretofore, as stated in your letter, a special bill for each battle field has been proposed by the sponsors therefor.

The proposed legislation appears to me to be objectionable and unnecessary for the following reasons:

(a) It creates a separate body reporting directly to the President when existing agencies could be utilized for the purpose.

(b) The salaries of the members of this commission and the traveling expenses while engaged in inspecting the battle fields and holding local hearings on the subject, constitute an unnecessary expense under the existing program of economy.

(c) It is not believed that the financial program will permit making appropriations within the next few years for all the battle fields and therefore surveys should be made of only a certain number each year.

(d) A certain amount of expense is involved in preparing a report on each battle field and appropriations should be authorized for the purpose before any survey is undertaken. Consequently, any omnibus bill of this nature should specify the battle fields for which reports are desired and a lump sum should be appropriated for carrying its provisions into effect, similar to the methods now used for examination and surveys of river and harbor projects.

5. It is believed that substantially the same results could be obtained by the enactment of legislation which would authorize the Secretary of War to make a study of all battle fields from both a military and historical standpoint with a view to submitting plans for properly commemorating battle fields and other points of historical and military interest. Such legislation should authorize the Secretary of War to include each year in the Army appropriation bill a specified list of battle fields for which surveys are to be made, together with the cost of making these surveys. It should also specify that upon completion of each survey a report and recommendation be rendered by the Secretary of War to Congress on the proper method and cost of establishing a national park or otherwise commemorating the historical event in question. The Secretary of War, under such legislation, could then appoint a board of officers to consider the general subject from a broad national viewpoint and employ the local agencies of the War Department in various parts of the country to make the necessary surveys and hold hearings on the project if necessary. A report of these hearings would be available for examination by the Military Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Army appropriation bill each year would then contain an item for national parks and monuments with subitems for surveys and for establishment, respectively.

6. If any additional information from the War Department is desired, I shall be pleased to furnish it.

Dwight F. Davis, Secretary of War.

My Dear Sir: In reply to your letter of April 8, 1926, and in response to your request for a draft of the legislation suggested in paragraph 5 of my report on H. R. 9765, I am pleased to inclose herewith a draft of a bill, which, in my opinion, would best accomplish the purpose desired by your committee.

Dwight F. Davis, Secretary of War.
DRAFT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

To provide for the study and investigation of battle fields in the United States for commemorative purposes

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to have made studies and investigations and, where necessary, surveys of all battle fields within the continental limits of the United States whereon troops of the United States or of the original thirteen Colonies have been engaged against a common enemy, with a view to preparing a general plan and such detailed projects as may be required for properly commemorating such battle fields or other adjacent points of historical and military interest.

Sec. 2. That on or before December 1, 1926, the Secretary of War shall submit through the President to Congress a preliminary plan by which the purpose of this act can, in his opinion, be most economically carried out; and annually thereafter he shall submit through the President to Congress a detailed report of progress made under this act together with his recommendations for further operations.

Sec. 3. That the Secretary of War shall include annually in his War Department appropriation estimates a list of the battle fields for which surveys or other field investigations are planned for the fiscal year in question, together with the estimated cost of making each survey or other field investigation.

Sec. 4. That hereafter no real estate shall be purchased for military park purposes by the Government, unless report thereon shall have been made by the Secretary of War through the President to Congress under the provisions of this act.