

THE FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL RE-UNION

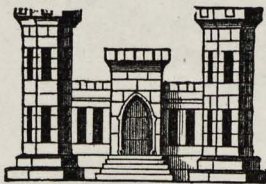
OF THE

Engineer Brigade, Army of the Potomac

Composed of the 15th and 50th Regiments, N. Y. State Volunteer Engineers.

President
 JOHN H. STEVENS, Co. G., 15th Regt.
 186 Washington St., Geneva, N. Y.

Vice-President
 WM. T. SMITH, Co. K, 50th Regt.
 7 Swift St., Waterloo, N. Y.



Secretary and Treasurer,
 SAM B. WILLIAMS, Co. L, 50th Regt.
 810 Powers Block,
 Rochester, N. Y.

Will be held at GENEVA, N. Y., Thursday, August 26, 1926.

Headquarters will be at the *Armory* where you will register and receive your badges. Business meeting at 11 o'clock—with a word of welcome from his Honor the Mayor, and some good clergyman will lead us in prayer.

A good dinner will be served by the Relief Corps, in the Mess Hall of the Armory, at 12:30.

The 1926 badges will soon be ready to mail—price 35 cents. Some comrades pay \$1.00 per year for them as a kind of annual dues, and the amount so received helps out on expenses. The proceeds from the sale of badges sold, at 35 cents each, will not do this, as the cost of postage, envelopes, circular letter and other notices comes to more than \$60.00 a year. I will send a copy of the *Geneva Daily Times*, showing who were present, also giving a list of those who have "gone over the river," since our last re-union, to all who order the badge, or who will write and request me to do so.

Let me know of any deaths that have occurred since our last re-union, giving if possible, *name, date of death, name of Company, Regiment and place of death*, so I can complete my *muster out roll*.

"When the *Roman Gladiators* marched around the Arena before they engaged in their combats, in which all were killed, they halted before the *Emperor* and saluted him with this significant remark, 'Sir, we who are about to die salute you,' and so with us today, who will soon pass out of this earthly life, give our final salute to the people of this great and glorious nation, to whom we gave the best of our young lives to save," and ask those in authority to deal kindly with the old soldiers that still live, and especially to the widows of those of our comrades that are yet with us, waiting for the re-union of their dear ones, gone before.

I think you will like it if I give the poem, I know not the writer, named "*Passing On*," for no one knows on the morrow, if *two* pass on or only *one*.

PASSING ON

The days grow shorter, the nights grow longer,
 The headstones thicken along the way;
 And life grows sadder, but love grows stronger,
 For those who walk with us day by day.

The tears come quicker, the laugh comes slower,
 The courage is less to do and dare;
 The tide of joy in the heart falls lower
 And seldom covers the reef of care.

And all the true things in the world seem truer,
 And the better things of earth seem best;
 And friends are dearer, as friends are fewer,
 And love is all, as our sun dips West.

Then let us clasp hands as we walk together,
 And let us speak softly in low, sweet tone;
 For no man knows on the morrow whether
 We two pass on, or one alone.

15TH REGIMENT

Most of the Companies came from New York City, Brooklyn and eastern part of the State, so have never been able to get a good record of them, or to get them to attend the Re-unions. To date I have in the 15th Regiment:

Total No. Reported	Alive	Dead	Missing
584	58	381	145

50TH REGIMENT

Total No. Reported	Alive	Dead	Missing
1308	137	979	192

Both Regiments had 12 Companies—150 men each—1,800 men.

Those reported missing are Comrades who have changed their address—now unknown—most of them no doubt now dead. My records show *Here* (Alive), *There* (Dead), *Where?* (Missing).

In sending my notices I use letter postage and request the postmaster to return if not delivered, with reasons for non-delivery. In this way I get a good many letters returned, simply stamped "Deceased." I also send extra 8 notices to the 15th Regiment and 43 notices to the 50th Regiment, being the widows, sons and daughters of our former Comrades.

To those who live near Geneva, and are able to make the trip, I hope you will attend just one more Re-union and have a quiet visit with those who are there. We are together for so short a time, it will not pay you to come any great distance, much as we would like to see you. But you can write a short letter to the old Boys and old Comrades of 60 years ago and tell how you are, and especially how old you will be at your nearest birthday.

I am sending notices this time to 58 of the 15th Regiment and 137 of the 50th Regiment, widows 27, sons and daughters 20, but fear that "Taps" have been sounded to many more of our Comrades. My list of deaths as reported to date is 13.

The following letter came to me under date of July 29, 1925:

My Dear Uncle Sam:

Wife and I very much appreciate your gracious kindness in sending to us a copy of the call to the 55th Annual Re-union of the Engineer Brigade, Army of the Potomac.

We wish it were possible for us to attend the Re-union for they must, perforce, grow less and less as times go on. Your forty-six years as secretary and treasurer of the organization tells us much of the faithfulness of a good soldier.

And what we especially love you for, is not alone that you have been a good soldier of your country, but what is far more even than that, you have been a good soldier of the Master.

The community in which you have lived is the better for your life, and your influence has ever been on the side of right, as the Master helped you to see the right.

That you may be spared for years more of service, not only to your organization, but to Him, is our wish for you, and that you one day add to your title, "for fifty years" instead of "forty-six." We join in our affectionate and kind regards to you.

Cordially yours,

Last year I sent my Re-union notice to a very dear friend and received this in reply:

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you for sending me your letter about the Veterans' Re-union. I am not sure that these re-unions are good things for the men, they are so sad that I should think they would weaken the will to live.

Some university classes make their 50th Re-union the last, just for this reason. However, I suppose there are some offsets on the other side that may make the meetings worth while.

Cordially yours,

I did not reply, or at least send any reply to the above, but perhaps I will send him copy of this circular letter.

I had received several letters that I made copy of in my book and following them, as I had the space, wrote as follows:

After reading these letters and remarks from the old soldiers, who were friends and comrades over 60 years ago, does it not seem rather chilly or cold to read about cutting out the Re-unions after fifty years?

It may be best for the college men to so decide, for without their fraternities they belong to and the few hours they spend together in their initiations of same, they have nothing in common compared with the old soldiers whose initiation ran from one to four years' time, and it was a question if they lived through the same or not. *Yes, my friend, "there are some offsets on the other side that may make the meetings worth while."*

Somewhat similar to the students who, with "a stein on the table," sang the song, "when good fellows get together," we get "we have drank from the same canteen," for it brings to mind the memory of the march, the skirmish, the field of battle, the wounded, the sickness and death. Would not the survivors of that great army be bound together by ties stronger than that given by any other organization?

"We have drank from the same canteen."

Yes, and also shared the dangers and privations more than those who have stayed at home to complete their college courses. So while these Re-unions are sad, with the thought that they cannot much longer continue, the survivors once more touch shoulder to shoulder and thank the good Lord that so many are yet spared to meet again, and our Re-union organization has voted to continue these Re-unions as long as two members are able to attend the same.

These are the views of Sam B. Williams, Sec'y-Treas., September, 1925. (No change yet in my opinion. July, 1926.)

I do not know of any better way to conclude this circular letter, than the way I always finish the same.

Kindly greetings and best wishes to our dear *Comrades* who are simply waiting for the call of our *Supreme Commander* to report at Headquarters and join the great majority now at rest on "*Fame's Eternal Camping Grounds*." Just a little longer, *Comrades*, to fully complete your work; so be cheerful, contented and happy, a source of joy, pleasure and comfort to all your friends; then your life will be a blessed memory to your family when of you they will also say:

"They are passing away, these dear old friends,
 Like a leaf on the current cast,
 With never a break in the rapid flow;
 We watch them as one by one they go,
 Into the beautiful past."

These are my sentiments, *Comrades*, from the bottom of my heart, and I fully recognize the fact that we, too, will soon join the great majority, on *Fame's Eternal Camping Grounds*.

God bless you, every one.

SAM B. WILLIAMS, Sec'y-Treas., for 47 years,
 810 Powers Block, Rochester, N. Y.

July 27, 1926.