



**Volume 55, No 5  
May, 2015**

**2015 Officers:**

**Anne M. Peasley, President**  
(530) 320-5112  
[apeasley22@gmail.com](mailto:apeasley22@gmail.com)

**Robert E. Hanley, IPP**  
(805) 796-5895  
[acivilwar@aol.com](mailto:acivilwar@aol.com)

**Donald J. Hayden, Vice  
President**  
(916) 485-1246  
[djhbooklover@yahoo.com](mailto:djhbooklover@yahoo.com)

**Silver N. Williams,**  
Program Director  
(916) 408-4574  
[snw5678@aol.com](mailto:snw5678@aol.com)

**Paul G. Ruud, Secretary**  
(530) 886-8806  
[paulruud@gmail.com](mailto:paulruud@gmail.com)

**George W. Foxworth,**  
Treasurer  
(916) 362-0178  
[gwoffoxworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwoffoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

**Nina L. Henley, MAL**  
(916) 481-4146  
[whenley@surewest.net](mailto:whenley@surewest.net)

**Wayne J. Henley, MAL**  
(916) 481-4146  
[whenley@surewest.net](mailto:whenley@surewest.net)

**VACANT**  
Editor

**SCWRT Website**  
[www.sacramentocwrt.com](http://www.sacramentocwrt.com)

**Kim Knighton, Webmaster**  
[webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com](mailto:webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com)

# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702  
<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



## President's Message

Greetings Fellow SCWRT Members,

Here's hoping the Gibson Ranch Civil War Days go off without a hitch and prove to be the best event ever. This is the first time I've had to miss it in nearly five years. Next year, I hope to stay in front of my schedule so that it doesn't happen again. I always learn something new, and I've come to know and admire so many of the participants. Have a great time if you are attending!

This month our speaker is the illustrious, smooth-talking Robert Hubbs. The talk is entitled "Four Regiments and Four Privates." Robert Hubbs's knowledge is encyclopedic, and he always presents his information with depth and intelligence and thoughtful answers to questions. Plus, added benefit, he's fun.

Rick Peasley has agreed to take over the duties of our presentation technology. In other words, he's our "roadie." He has agreed to give anyone interested a demonstration of how our projector and PowerPoint works. He will be holding it at 6:30 PM at the Hof Brau (that's if he can get it to work, ha-ha). With hard work and any luck, our technological glitches will be a thing of the past.

Our Board will be hold its next meeting on May 13th at 10 AM and will be located at Brookfields Restaurant, 4343 Madison Avenue, Sacramento. Please feel welcome to attend. We are interested in enticing new interest in Board positions and would love to have you.

Enjoy May. I'll see you all on the evening of May 13th.

Regards,

**Anne Peasley, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, April 8, 2015**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDANCE – 40**

**MEMBERS – 32:** Anne M. Peasley, President, George W. Foxworth, Treasurer, Paul Ruud, Secretary, Silver Williams, Program Director, James M. Armstrong, Roy Bishop, Fred Bohmfalk, Harvey Cain, Marsha Jutovsky Cain, Ardith Cnota, Mitch Cnota, Alice Corley, Monica Foxworth, Robert E. Hanley, IPP, Jim Harper, Nina Henley, MAL, Wayne Henley, MAL, Christopher Highsmith, James Juanitas, Arnold Kuntz, Rick A. Peasley, Horst Penning, John Rice, Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, Richard Sickert, Shari Sickert, Roxanne E. Spizzirri, Michael Werner, Bob Williams, John V. Zasso, Vivian Zasso.

**GUESTS – 8:** Esther Boeck, Sean Keister, Doug Ose, Ed Rill, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri, Ray Valdez, Don A. Zajic.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Anne Peasley.
2. President Peasley led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. President Peasley gave a last call to purchase raffle tickets. John Zasso read the lucky numbers.
4. Doug Ose gave a briefing regarding the Reenactment to be held at Gibson Ranch on May 1-3. Ose reported that 2,100 students have signed up and paid to attend in three groups – one at 9 AM, another at 11AM and a final one at 1PM. A volunteer work squad of 60 students has been recruited to assist docents in leading students to the reenactors' briefing stations.
5. President Peasley turned the floor over to Richard Sickert for the evening's presentation. Richard began by explaining how he had come to be interested in the Bullion Bend robbery. In 1957, he worked at the Pacific Work Center in Placerville. When he was promoted to drive a water truck, he underwent a brief training program. During a training ride, the trainer stopped the truck at a particular spot and explained that this was the location of the Bullion Bend Robbery during the Civil War. As the saying goes, the rest is history. The year 1864 was well before Highway 50 so the main traffic flow through the area was across quite rugged terrain from Virginia City, Nevada, to Placerville, California. Interesting enough, the trail in some sections appeared to be parallel to the current Highway 50.
6. On June 30, 1864, the stagecoach traveling to Placerville was carrying in today's equivalent, around \$40,000. It was held up by six robbers, including Rufus Ingram and Tom Poole.
7. The details of the story are too many to adequately describe in this brief report. The robbers later went to San Jose but were ultimately tracked down and arrested. After April of 1865, all charges were dropped except for Poole who received his justice in September of that year.
8. Yes, Richard assures us that the Civil War also happened in Northern California!
9. President Peasley thanked Richard with kind words and good wine for a most interesting presentation.
10. In closing, President Peasley encouraged members to consider serving on the SCWRT Board of Directors. New ideas, new energy, new everything - all would be good!
11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM. The May Board Meeting will be Wednesday, May 13, 2015, 10:00 AM, at Brookfield's Restaurant. Come one, come all!

**Paul Ruud, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance following the April 8, 2015 meeting was \$5,119.83. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$39.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

<b>Coming Programs for 2015 and 2016</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
May 13th	Robert R. Hubbs	"Four Regiments and Four Privates"
June 10th	Martin Cain	"Baseball in the Civil War"
July 8th	Joe Maxwell	"George Armstrong Custer, Part II"
August 12th	Nancy B. Samuelson	"Nathan Bedford Forrest"
September 9th	Fred Bohmfalk	"A Personal Look at the Lives of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan"
October 14th	Tom Lubas	"Chicago, That Toddlin' Civil War Town"
November 11th	Tad Smith	"The Failed Struggle to Obtain Recognition of the Confederacy by England and France"
December 9th	Nicholas Scivoletto	"General Joseph E. Johnston"
January 13th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
February 10th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
March 9th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
April 13th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

### **2015 Membership**

The 2015 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2015. The dues are \$20.00 and you can renew at a monthly meeting or send to the Treasurer through the mail. For all checks, make them payable to **Sacramento Civil War Round Table** and send them to

George W. Foxworth  
 9463 Salishan Court  
 Sacramento, CA 95826-5233

Remember, you can also pay at any monthly meeting.

### **NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES**

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for that month's **Battle Cry**. However, you can submit articles at anytime. Please submit your items in Microsoft Word or regular email to:

[gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

Do not submit scanned files since I need to edit files to combine the **Battle Cry**.

The **Battle Cry** is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Submissions are subject to availability of space and size limitations. Submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization or the Editor. The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 254702, Sacramento, CA 95865-4702. <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org> is the web site address. Check the web for past newsletter editions and information about the group.

## **A Report on the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Gibson Ranch Re-Enactment**

### **By George W. Foxworth**

The National Civil War Association (NCWA) continued its 2015 re-enactment season on May 1-3 at historic Gibson Ranch in Elverta, California. The theme was "Appomattox." The NCWA is a private non-profit organization that uses "living history" to help the public to better understand the American Civil War. By portraying the manner in which the soldiers and civilians lived, worked, fought, and died during the Civil War era, the NCWA hopes to keep alive the spirit and sacrifice made by the men, women, and children of that time.

Gibson Ranch is a Sacramento County Park with rolling and grassy hills that allows excellent views of the battlefield and camps. The site accommodated the camps, horses, cannons, soldiers, civilians, and other attendees. In addition, the slight slope of the hillside gave an excellent view of the entire battlefield.

On May 1st, Friday, the NCWA and Gibson Ranch hosted over 2,300 students from Sacramento area schools. The Sacramento Civil War Round Table (SCWRT) served as docents for the school children. On May 2nd and 3rd, the SCWRT hosted an event booth.

The following SCWRT members participated with the school children: Roy Bishop, Harvey and Marsha Cain, George and Monica Foxworth, Bob Hanley, Don Hayden, Elizabeth Henley, Wayne Henley, Sean Keister, Arnold Kunst, Robert Linggi, and John Zasso. In addition, the following SCWRT members worked in the SCWRT booth: George Foxworth, Bob Hanley, Don Hayden, and Vivian Zasso. SCWRT member John Zasso was a re-enactor on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. SCWRT members H. Jim Harper attended the re-enactment. We thank the volunteers, participants, and attendees.

On Saturday and Sunday, President Abraham Lincoln (Don Ancell) gave presentations with questions from the audience on Appomattox and the life and times of Mr. Lincoln. The public was actively involved. The presentations were excellent and well-received by the attendees.

The conditions were dry, warm, and windy.

The 2015 Gibson Ranch event was a complete success and the NCWA and Gibson Ranch are commended for their great work. A special thank you to Mr. Doug Ose for his part in keeping the Ranch open. We also thank Delrae Pope and Stephanie La Fazia for managing the event and Scott Lee Spence (NCWA) for coordinating the event. We look ahead to 2016. The theme will be "Battle of Fort Sumter."



## In Partial Defense of Major General William Franklin

During the early and mid Nineteenth Century, U.S. Military Academy cadets who graduated in the upper 5-10±% of their respective classes were normally posted to either the Corps of Engineers (CE's) or the Corps of Topographical Engineers (TE's or topogs). With rare exception, these very bright students of West Point Professor Dennis Hart Mahan became outstanding staff engineering officers during the Mexican and/or early days of the Civil War.

Their duties were to design and oversee construction of military and civil engineering works such as forts, field fortifications, buildings, roads, railroads, water supply, and drainage facilities. Also included were the preparation of topographic maps and the survey of waterways, plus explorations and "pathfinding" through the then vast wilderness areas of the country. Membership of the two engineer corps at the beginning of the Civil War was a small "elite" group totaling 79 officers (44 had served during the Mexican War), increasing to 105 a year later. Their duties required them to be cautious, methodical, and exact.

Some 70 of this group continued as engineers or served in other staff capacities during the Civil War. Eleven became general officers in staff assignments; the best known of whom was perhaps Montgomery Meigs, the Union Quartermaster General. The others were Generals Totten, Delafield, Barnard, Benham, Cullum, Duane, Gilmer, Haupt, Poe, and Michler. The performance of these engineers in their staff capacities was generally exemplary in all respects. They remained true to their academic standings of "the best and the brightest."

Of the other 35 of the group (although several remained in engineering staff assignments serving well early on), all accepted general officer commissions later and became Division, Corps, and/or Army-level line combat commanders. Many served with great distinction. Notably among these were Lee and Meade, of course. But for others, approximately half, their "best and brightest" status began to falter, as was the case with Halleck and

Beauregard. The status of a few others in the group in effect reached the point of near complete failure. Notable among the later was McClelland and Franklin.

Although the problems of these flawed, near failed, or failed commanders may have been in part due to other reasons (political, philosophical, whatever?), some believe that the core problem was their inability to break through what has been called the engineer's mind-set of accuracy, methodology, and exactness. You cannot approach a battlefield situation like you are preparing a construction drawing. Windows of opportunity can be very short and must be acted upon rapidly. Time does not permit continued study and procrastination in the interest of accuracy and eloquence of solution. William B. Franklin, who graduated 1<sup>st</sup> in his class of 1843, never learned this; but U.S. Grant who graduated 21<sup>st</sup> in that class did. Similarly, James B. McPherson, 1<sup>st</sup> in the 1853 class, had trouble grasping the thought, but his classmate P. H. Sheridan, 34<sup>th</sup> in class standing, certainly did not. Was Professor Mahan perhaps doing something wrong?

William Buel Franklin was born in York, PA in 1823. He graduated from West Point (1-39) twenty years later and was assigned to the Topographical Engineers. He participated in western mapping expeditions, served in the Mexican War, receiving two brevets, returned to West Point on a teaching tour as Assist. Prof. of Natural Philosophy (i.e. physics). He supervised hydrographic surveys and harbor improvement projects on the Great Lakes; was involved in Mississippi River Bridge construction at the Rock Island Arsenal, was appointed the CE member of the U.S. Lighthouse Board; and received a particularly interesting and responsible assignment as resident engineer on public works projects in Washington, D.C. The latter work included construction of the Capitol Dome. (In this assignment, he replaced Montgomery Meigs, who had been sent to the Fort Jefferson Project, Dry Tortugas, Florida, after a dispute with Secretary of War John Floyd-- but that is another story.) As a Captain of Engineers in early 1861, Bill Franklin was at the zenith of his military career. He had spent nearly eighteen years on surveys, construction projects, as a teacher, and sitting on boards. He was honorable, ethical (at a time and place where corruption was rampant), a superb engineer and a

conscientious public servant: but he had never commanded troops.

With the administration change and the very corrupt John B. Floyd's departure, Meigs was returned to Washington to his previous assignments and later as QMG. Franklin was appointed by President Lincoln to an advisory board to prepare recommendations for expanding the regular army. Other members were AG Colonel Lorenzo Thomas and Major Irvin McDowell. The board's work was approved 14 May 1861, and Franklin was commissioned Colonel of Infantry in the RA, declining an appointment of Major General in the Pennsylvania militia. He commanded the 12<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry Regiment. As he was just learning his new regimental command duties, a decision was made to brigade militia infantry regiments under regular army colonels. Franklin thus became an instantaneous and very inexperienced brigade commander. Notwithstanding, his unit fared no worse than other brigades at Bull Run losing *only* 384 men before the entire mob headed post haste back to Washington D.C.

Franklin was delighted upon George McClelland's assignment as CG, and they became close friends and confidants. In fact, it is said that he knew of Little Mac's peninsula plans before Lincoln did. In August 1861, he took command of a new division with brigades led by Phil Kearney, Henry Slocum, and John Newton, a close former CE friend. In May 1862, he was named Corps Commander of the new VI Corps, which was to include his old division (to be under Slocum), and one commanded by W. F. "Baldy" Smith, another former CE colleague and close friend. The VI Corps provided good albeit not distinguished service for the remainder of the campaign, the Seven Days, Harrison's Landing, and back to Second Manassas. Franklin was breveted BG in the regular army and promoted to MG of volunteers.

William Franklin was appalled at Little Mac's removal and John Pope's appointment as CG of the Army of the Potomac (AOP). (He had likewise been considerably annoyed upon Henry Halleck's earlier assignment as the Army's CG replacing McClelland.) Franklin frankly had trouble keeping his mouth shut about his dislikes, and he exhibited only minimum loyalties to Pope. Although he escaped the severe problems, which befell Fitz-John Porter (V Corps), this may have been only barely so.

At Second Manassas, Pope accused Franklin of tardiness, and probably rightly so. Lightning fast movements were not a part of Bill Franklin's repertoire. He had turned out to be a stubborn methodical, mechanical commander who could eventually accomplish a mission, but not until everything was in place. Engineer mentality? Perhaps that is the reason why he got along so well with McClelland—because they were so similar? Needless to say, Franklin was delighted when he learned of Little Mac's reinstatement at the outset of R. E. Lee's Maryland Campaign.

Upon discovering that Lee had split his forces with Longstreet south of Hagerstown along Antietam Creek and Jackson about to attack at Harper's Ferry, McClelland decided to cross South Mountain via Turner's, Fox's, and Crampton's Gaps. This was to be done by Hooker's I Corps, Reno's IX Corps, and Franklin's VI Corps, respectively, to interpose between the rebel forces and engage them in detail. Franklin's orders of 13 Sept 1862 were to move from Burkittsville through Crampton's Gap into Pleasant Valley and hence south 8 miles to relieve the garrison at Harper's Ferry. He was slow in starting with his 12,800 soldiers in two divisions. He carried the Mountain handily on the 14<sup>th</sup>, but was slow getting started again on the 15<sup>th</sup> and moved with unwarranted caution. He considered that he had a 2-to-1 disadvantage, where actually he had a 3-to-1 advantage. His poor performance on 15 Sept made possible the surrender of Harper's Ferry and its substantial garrison. He was "half-a-day too late."

Had Franklin been more aggressive and exhibited even nominal skill as a combat commander, the entire Maryland Campaign may have turned out much more favorably for the Union. But William Franklin, the engineer, was not a risk taker especially with Stonewall Jackson looming just over the hill. He was indeed a mirror of his commander's own characteristics. VI Corps was subsequently held in reserve taking no active part in the 17 Sept Battle of Antietam. Franklin was critical of Little Mac for not giving him more credit for the "brilliant" victory at Crampton Gap; but he was more critical of Lincoln for the removal of McClelland, and the assigning of Ambrose Burnside to command the Army of the Potomac. This was the case even though Franklin and Burnside were friends at this point in time.

The next episode in William Franklin's misadventures and misdeeds as a combat commander occurred during the Battle of Fredericksburg, 13-14 Dec 1862. Burnside had rearranged the Army into three "Grand Divisions" of two corps each; commanded by Sumner (II & XII), Hooker (III & V), and Franklin (I & VI). I Corps was commanded by Reynolds, and included Meade's Division. Baldy Smith was in command of VI. The plan was to capture Fredericksburg on the south bank of the Rappahannock River, as a base for further offensive action against Richmond. Five pontoon bridges were to be built, three opposite town and two downstream. The bridge trains arrived several days late, however, and the element of surprise was lost. Lee's Army had moved into the area in force.

Upon crossing the upstream bridges, Sumner's forces moved through town but then were overwhelmed in several attempted frontal attacks on the well-defended Marye's Heights just beyond. Concurrently, Franklin on the left was ordered to cross on the two downstream bridges to turn Lee's right flank, but he sent an insufficient force, Meade's Division alone. Meade was partially successful, but the effort failed due to lack of support from other units that Franklin had available, but did not deploy. Had he done so Lee's flank would have been turned and the outcome of this disastrous battle might have been quite different.

In Franklin's defense, it is true that his orders were ambiguous and, in fact, contradictory. But one might expect that he would have requested clarification early on. But it was Burnside who bore ultimate responsibility for the Union tragedy for he was the one who ordered the repeated suicidal attacks against the strong natural Confederate positions. Union and Rebel losses were 12,500 and 4,700, respectively.

The next six-weeks were a period of blaming, bickering, and backbiting by the top leaders of the AOP. Franklin further erred when he and Smith sent a letter directly to the President critical of Burnside's strategies. That was certainly unprofessional and possibly insubordinate. After considerable agonizing, Lincoln removed Burnside and replaced him with Hooker. Franklin, Sumner, Smith, and Nelson were also relieved of command on 25 January 1863. Franklin traveled to York, PA to "await orders."

Hearings were held by the Congressional Joint Committee for Conduct of the War (JCCW) in which Franklin was found to have been negligent. He did a good job in rebuttal, pointing out biases and irregularities in the Committee's deliberations, but the tarnish was still extant. Had William Franklin, the old engineer, screwed up again? If it were "three strikes and you are out," he would have been permanently on the "bench." However, Franklin retained many friends in the Army. Included were Meade, Reynolds, Sedgewick, Slocum, and Couch; but, most importantly, Halleck and his classmate Grant. Accordingly, he was granted another chance. On 25 June 1863, he received orders from Chief of Staff Henry Halleck to report to General Nathaniel B. Banks in New Orleans. The Red River Campaign was about to commence. Banks, a political general had proven to be a competent administrator, but an incompetent field commander.

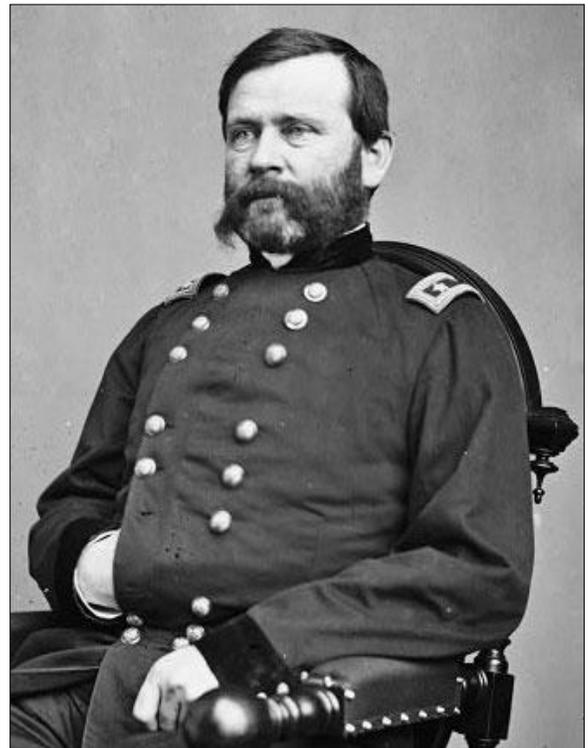
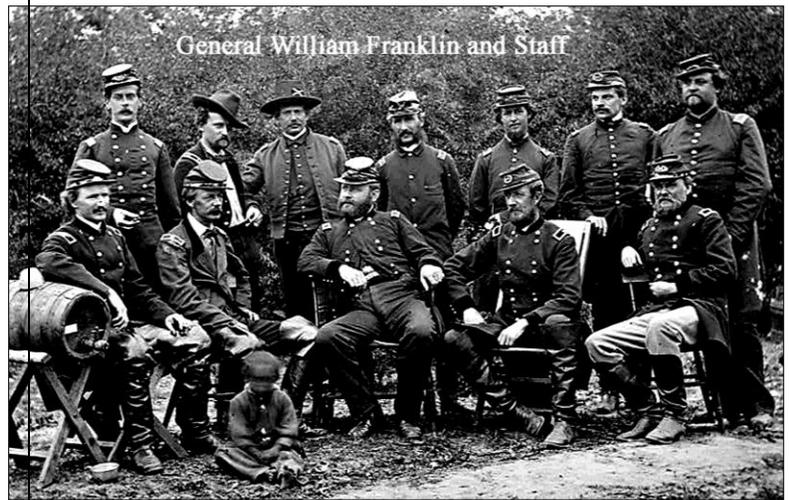
Halleck's intent was for Franklin to be second in command and, in addition to serving as the XIX Corps commander, provide Banks with professional advice and counsel, i. e. someone to lean on. It did not work quite as planned, however, Banks did not solicit much advice from Franklin, and the latter did not proffer on several occasions when he should have. In fact, Franklin made a few mistakes of his own, particularly his order of march prior to the Battle of Sabine Cross Roads, 8 April 1864, where he received a leg wound. Franklin did, however, strongly recommend and support his engineer officer's (LTC Joseph Bailey) proposal to build dams to float Admiral Porter's gunboats past the Alexandria Rapids. This action saved the most valued gunboats and monitors of the Mississippi Fleet from capture and/or destruction. Franklin's wound was not healing well, and on 2 May, he was granted convalescent leave to New Orleans. The Red River Campaign had been a catastrophe, and Franklin's service must probably be judged no better than mediocre. He did earn himself another "invitation" to testify before the JCCW, but he was not faulted for the Red River disaster. On 20 June, Franklin again returned home to await orders.

William Franklin's performance in Louisiana had not further damaged his career, but it had not enhanced it either. In July, he went to City Point to see Grant and his old friend Baldy Smith. He was hoping for an assignment in the Army of the Potomac again. Grant was amenable, but soon

received word from Halleck that Stanton and Lincoln were not. In route back to York, Franklin was captured on a B&O RR train, but escaped the next day. In mid-August, Franklin met with another old friend, George McClelland, to support him in the forthcoming election. McClelland's defeat was a reaffirmation that Franklin would not be returning to active military campaigning. He saw no further duty in the field, serving on boards and courts, and awaiting orders. He was in his words, "a member of the noble army of the shelved." In November 1865, he resigned his commissions (RA Colonel and USV MG) to take a civilian job as Vice President for Production of Colt's Fire Arms Company in Hartford, Connecticut.

Franklin effectively served the Company for the next 22 years as General Manager and Chief Engineer, retiring in 1888. He had rebuilt the physical plant, signed large contracts for new sales in Europe and Russia, developed new products including perfection of the Gatland gun, rifles, pistols, and improved center-fired metallic cartridges. He and his wife Anna were active in the civic and cultural affairs of the city and he became a close friend of Samuel Clemens. He was a staunch member of the G.A.R, and served on numerous boards and commissions. They included: the West Point Board of Visitors, Connecticut State Capitol Commission, Board of Water Commissioners, and as President of the National Soldier's Home Board. (This latter organization eventually became the Veterans Administration.)

William Franklin died 8 March 1903 at 80 years. He had outlived the majority of his contemporaries. One of his eulogists stated that in measuring his life it is important to view the entire span of his eighty years, not just the four years of the Civil War. Yes, that is indeed necessary, if one wishes to recite his positive aspects. But William B. Franklin will still be remembered as a Civil War general that exemplifies the fact that high scholastic obtainment did not necessarily correlate with distinguished military achievement. Franklin did not fail to succeed, he succeeded to fail. Had he remained in staff engineering assignments, it would have been an entirely different story.



**Reference:** "From First to Last, The Life of Major General W. B. Franklin," by Mark A. Snell 2002

**R. A. Williams: 6-30-2004; Rev. 3-12-2015**

