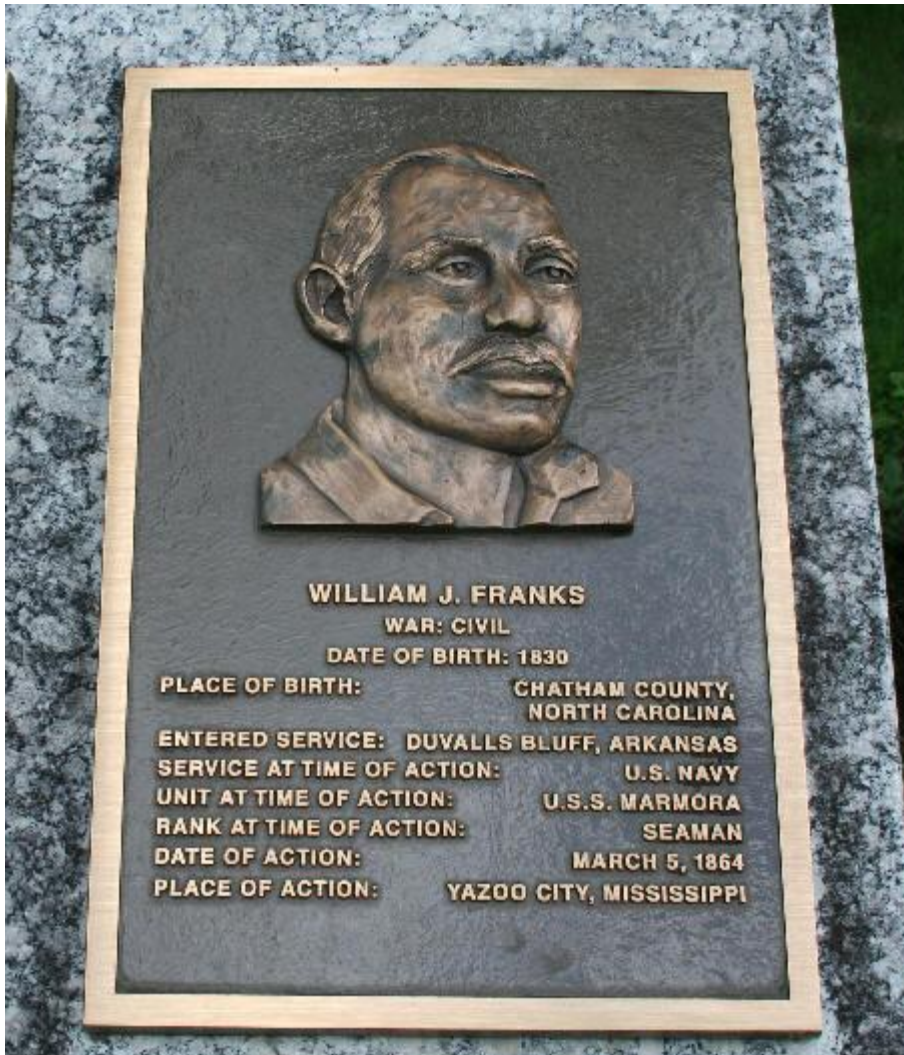


William Joseph Franks (1830 – April 18, 1880)



Rank: Acting Master's Mate

Buried: Maple Springs Cemetery, Batesville, AR

Find A Grave Memorial# 9912250

Biography

Franks was born in Pittsboro, North Carolina in 1830. He enlisted in the Navy on September 16, 1863.

Franks distinguished himself in action at Yazoo City, Mississippi on March 5, 1864 when he and his shipmates from the USS *Marmora* (1862) landed a 12-pound howitzer to defend the city, which was threatened by strong Confederate forces. The actions of Franks and his men played the most

important role in maintaining the Union position. Franks received the Medal of Honor and was promoted to Acting Master's Mate in recognition of his actions. Two of his shipmates, Seaman James Stoddard and Seaman Bartlett Laffey, were also awarded the medal for being on the gun crew.

Franks was discharged from the Navy in August 1865, and settled in Arkansas. He married Mary Francis in 1865, after his separation from the Navy; according to the 1880 Federal census, they had five children. William J. Franks died in April of 1880 and is buried in Maple Springs Cemetery in Batesville, Arkansas.

Namesake

A *Fletcher*-class destroyer, USS *Franks* (DD-554), was named in his honor and launched on December 7, 1942.

Medal of Honor citation

Rank and organization: Seaman, U.S. Navy. Born: 1830, Chatham County, N.C. Entered service at: Duvalls Bluff, Ark. G.O. No.: 32, April 16, 1864.

Citation:

Served on board the U.S.S. *Marmora* off Yazoo City, Miss., 5 March 1864. Embarking from the *Marmora* with a 12-pound howitzer mounted on a field carriage, Franks landed with the gun and crew in the midst of heated battle and, bravely standing by his gun despite enemy rifle fire which cut the gun carriage and rammer contributed to the turning back of the enemy during the fierce engagement.