

HOW FORT DUFFIELD GOT ITS NAME

Fort Duffield, the largest Civil War earthen fortress in Kentucky, overlooks West Point, Kentucky (at the border of Jefferson County, home of Louisville; and Hardin County) at the confluence of the Salt and Ohio Rivers. In the early 1990's, members of the Fort Duffield Heritage Committee named the fort in honor of Colonel William W. Duffield.

Construction began in early November, 1861, with most of the work being done by the men of the Ninth Michigan Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel William W. Duffield. The fort was first named in honor of Colonel Duffield's father, Reverend George Duffield, a Michigan clergyman. Lieutenant Henry M. Duffield, William's younger brother was also stationed at the fort. Later in life, Henry wrote a book on the lives and exploits of the men who won the Congressional Medal of Honor, which was instituted during the Civil War.

William Ward Duffield was born at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1824, the son of Reverend George Duffield & Isabella Bethubne Duffield. He married Annie Louise Ladue, in 1854, and their children were Will Ward Duffield, 1858-1939, and Louise Angel Duffield, 1855-1941. William was educated at Columbia University, where he graduated, in 1843, with a degree in Engineering.

Duffield fought in the Mexican War with a Tennessee regiment. He went to California as a paymaster after the war and qualified as a founding member in the Society of California Pioneers.

When the Civil War broke out, he recruited a unit and commanded the 3rd Michigan Infantry Regiment. He resigned before they left the state and then commanded the 9th Michigan Infantry Regiment, in October, 1861, as a Colonel.

Colonel Duffield was recognized as a just man and was appointed to the Military Board of Review, in January 1862. He wrote "School of the Brigade and the Evolution of the Line" in 1862. He was Military Commander of the State of Kentucky, in May & June, 1862, and promoted to Brigadier General. He was wounded and captured at the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in June 1862. General Duffield was discharged after a lengthy recovery.

Following the Civil War, William managed coal mines in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Kentucky for several years and also surveyed for railroads. In 1894, he was appointed as head of the Coastal & Geodetic Survey in Washington, D.C. He left office when William McKinley was elected President and lived in Washington, D.C. until his death.

William W. Duffield died, in June, 1907 and was buried in Section 3 of Arlington National Cemetery.