

Captain John H. Thompson
Grimes-Thompson Battery – Virginia Light Artillery

John H. Thompson was born July 5, 1823.

He enlisted on April 20, 1861 in Portsmouth, Virginia as a 2nd Lt. in Grimes Battery. Elected 1st Lt. of Grimes Battery in the April, 1862 army re-organization.

Among other engagements, the battery saw action at Richardson's Mill, French's Field, Malvern Hill, Warrenton Springs, 2nd Manassas, Crampton's Gap and Sharpsburg. Lt. Thompson commanded the battery at Sharpsburg. He was promoted to Captain, and permanent command of the battery, on September 17, 1862.

The battery was disbanded October 4, 1862 and 68 men were transferred to the Norfolk Light Artillery and 18 to Moorman's Battery. Captain Thompson and his fellow battery officers were transferred to duty with the Conscription Department in Richmond.

From November, 1862 to March, 1863 John was an 'Exchange Officer' at a Union prison camp in Petersburg processing Union POW's for exchange at City Point, Virginia.

Captain Thompson served the balance of war as an Assistant Provost Marshal in the department of General Winder headquartered in Richmond, Virginia. He served at various points in Virginia, Mississippi and for a time in Augusta, Georgia, (date unknown) to supervise transportation of Union POW's to a new prison camp in Andersonville, Georgia. Reportedly offered command of the prison camp & he flatly refused stating he, "did not enter the Army to be a jailer or a prison keeper." His replacement was Captain Henry Wirz.

John was in Danville, Virginia, when Lee surrendered at Appomattox. He continued south into North Carolina and was captured crossing the Catawba River and signed his parole papers.

Postwar John lived in Portsmouth, Virginia, with his wife Elizabeth and their children Parthenia, John H., Robert C., Virginius, and Lena. John was a ferry pilot and then a rigger with the navy yard. He was an active member of the Masonic Lodge, served on the City Council and also as a city health inspector. Elizabeth passed away sometime after the 1880 census. John is shown married to Emma in both the 1900 and 1910 census. John died on August 22, 1917 (94 years) and is buried in the Oak Grove Cemetery in Portsmouth, Virginia.

(ed: Grimes Battery, R. Thomas Crew, Jr. and B. Trask, 1995, Lynchburg, p. 119; Compiled Service Records of CSA soldiers- Microfilm files of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia; A Record of events of Norfolk City, Virginia 1861-1865, John W. H. Porter, Portsmouth, 1892, p. 38-46 (Portsmouth/Grimes Light Artillery); Biography of Confederate Military History – Virginia (1899); 1885 Application to the Portsmouth & Norfolk Cty. Association of Confederate Veterans; Additional family history provided by his great-great grandson Mr. Mac Parker of Williamsburg, Virginia.)