

# William J. Snow 1890

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*William Josiah Snow* was born in W Brooklyn, N. Y., December 16, 1868, the son of William Dunham Snow and Mary Elizabeth Newell Snow. Both his parents were of pure Colonial New England ancestry.

In 1876 the family removed to a farm near River Vale, New Jersey, where they lived until General Snow entered the Military Academy. He completed his pre-college education at the Hackensack, N. J., High School from which he graduated in 1885. He entered Steven's Institute but withdrew in a short time to take the entrance examination for the Military Academy, which he entered July 1, 1886. He was graduated and commissioned Additional Second Lieutenant, First Artillery, June 12, 1890.

He served at Fort Hamilton and Fort Wadsworth, N. Y., as lieutenant assigned to coast defense companies of his regiment. In 1892 he was returned to Fort Hamilton and assigned to a light battery and from this time always remained assigned, when on duty with troops, to what is now known as Field Artillery. In 1896 he was sent as a student to The Artillery School, Fort Monroe, Virginia—a two-year course from which he graduated in 1898.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War Lieutenant Snow was ordered to Fort St. Phillip, Louisiana, but was very shortly promoted First Lieutenant and ordered to Fort Slocum, N. Y., where he served as Regimental Quartermaster. In 1900 he applied for assignment to a battery then under orders to proceed to China for duty in connection with the Boxer Rebellion. He joined this battery in Washington, D. C., and accompanied it to San Francisco where the battery received orders to the Philippine Islands. He served with his battery in the Philippines until in May, 1901, he was promoted Captain and ordered to Fort Riley, Kansas. Here he organized and commanded the Twentieth Field Battery (Horse) which, in the reorganization of the Artillery Corps in 1907, became Battery E, 6th Field Artillery.

In 1907 Captain Snow was selected to attend the Army War College, Washington, D. C., as a student, being the first Field Artillery officer to be selected for this assignment. Upon graduation in 1908 he returned to his regiment at Fort Riley and was appointed Regimental Adjutant. In 1910, during an encampment at Fort Riley of National Guard Field Artillery officers from all over the country, with the encouragement of the late Brigadier General Ell D. Hoyle (then Lieutenant Colonel, commanding the 6th Field Artillery), Captain Snow organized The Field Artillery Association and became its first Secretary and the first Editor of *The Field Artillery Journal*—employments which he filled at Fort

Riley and Washington with marked ability, in addition to his other duties.

In 1910 Captain Snow was ordered to Washington for duty in the Militia Bureau of the War Department where he remained until 1914. He was promoted Major in March, 1911. During his tour of duty in the Militia Bureau regular Inspector-Instructors of the National Guard were employed for the first time in the first effort ever made for the coordination of training of that component of the Army. Major Snow was in charge of this vital effort in the Field Artillery arm—a duty which he performed so ably and so tactfully as to secure the complete confidence of Field Artillery officers throughout the National Guard, a confidence which he retained during his entire service and which was invaluable to the national effort when he became Chief of Field Artillery in World War I.

In 1914 Major Snow came under the operation of the "Manchu Law" and was assigned to the 2d Field Artillery (Mountain) at Camp Stotsenburg, Pampanga, P. I., which he joined in January, 1915. Here he served as Battalion Commander until he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel in June and Colonel in July, 1916, when he was transferred to the 1st Field Artillery at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

In April, 1917, Colonel Snow, having completed his tour of foreign service, was at sea, enroute from Honolulu to San Francisco, when the United States entered World War I. For short periods he commanded regiments at Fort Bliss, Texas, and Syracuse, New York, and about June 1st was ordered to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to organize an officers' school for Field Artillery. The school he organized has been in continuous operation ever since—The Field Artillery School.

In August, 1917, Colonel Snow was promoted Brigadier General, National Army, and assigned to command the Field Artillery Brigade at Camp Jackson, South Carolina. Here he remained until he was assigned as Chief of Field Artillery, February 1, 1918, this being the first assignment of an officer as chief of a line arm of the service. General Snow remained Chief of Field Artillery by assignment and later, when the office was established by law, by appointment until his retirement in 1927. He was promoted Major General, National Army, in June, 1918, and appointed Major General, Chief of Field Artillery, July 1, 1920.

When General Snow became Chief of Field Artillery in 1918, it is scarcely an exaggeration to describe conditions within the arm as chaotic. There was no uniformity in the training of the different brigades; there had been no planned assignment of personnel and the Zone of the Interior was well-nigh depleted of trained officers, yet there were more brigades to be organized and trained; because there had been no central authority to decide questions of design and requirements, production of materiel was at a standstill and the manufacture of ammunition and accessories was greatly delayed. Within hours of the establishment of his office, General Snow began bringing order and system out of chaos. Incredibly soon remedies had been found for and applied to the various evils which confronted

him. Any detailed account of General Snow's accomplishments as Chief of Field Artillery would be beyond the province of this brief memorial. It is sufficient to say that steady and rapid progress in the production of materiel followed his assignment; that uniformity in training was accomplished by a constructive inspection system and by the establishment of Brigade Training Centers; that an adequate and timely production of trained officers was secured and maintained by a Central Officers' Training School; and that successful provision was made for the timely flow to units overseas of replacements trained in the essential specialties. For his services as Chief of Field Artillery in World War I, General Snow was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by his own government, the Order of the Bath by Great Britain, and the Legion of Honor by France.

On December 19, 1927, General Snow was retired for physical disability and thereafter made his home in Washington, D. C., and Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania.

In 1892, while still a Second Lieutenant, General Snow married Miss Isabel O'Hear Locke, of Atlanta, Georgia. This marriage was a singularly happy and devoted one and Mrs. Snow's gracious kindness will be long remembered by the hundreds of people with whom the General's various assignments brought her into contact. They had one son, William Arthur Snow (U.S.M.A. Class of 1916), who had a distinguished career in the Corps of Engineers during and subsequent to World War I.

Loyal to his superiors and with an extreme sense of his obligations to his subordinates, the noble simplicity of General Snow's character is beyond the power of description. In him, to a cool, sound judgment, a keen, quick, mind, and a perfect technical education, was added an innate courtesy and kindness which endeared him to all who had the privilege of knowing him. The writer, who was an officer of Field Artillery, has never known an officer of the arm, during General Snow's long incumbency as its Chief, who did not evidence a profound and almost reverent affection for him.

General Snow had but two deep interests in life: his profession and his family. His later years were saddened by the untimely death of his distinguished son in 1940, and by the loss of his deeply beloved wife in 1944. He died in Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C., February 27, 1947, survived by a devoted daughter (Mrs. Margaret Payne Snow, the widow of his son) and two grandchildren: Miss Margaret Snow and Lieutenant William Josiah Snow (U.S.M.A. Class of 1945), Air Corps.