

# GENERAL JOHN F. HARTRANFT



*As Portrayed by John Schlotter*



In April 1861, Hartranft raised a Montgomery County regiment of ninety-day volunteers in Norristown PA, serving as colonel of the 4th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Their term of enlistment up, the regiment returned to PA on the eve of the First Battle of Bull Run, just as the firing began. Hartranft was humiliated by his men's decision to go home. He stayed to fight with the Army on July 21, 1861. This act earned him the Medal of Honor on August 21, 1886, for volunteering his services to fellow Pennsylvanian Brig. Gen. William B. Franklin. His citation reads: "Voluntarily served as an aide and participated in the battle after expiration of his term of service, distinguishing himself in rallying several regiments which had been thrown into confusion."

Hartranft raised a three-year regiment, the 51st PA Infantry, and became its colonel. They first served on the North Carolina coast in the Burnside Expedition; Hartranft led them in battle at Roanoke Island and New Bern. In July 1862, Hartranft's men proceeded to Newport News, VA to become part of Burnside's IX Corps, with whom they fought in the Second Battle of Bull Run and at South Mountain.

Hartranft fought at the Battle of Antietam, where he led the famous charge across Burnside's Bridge.

His regiment also was engaged in the Battle of Fredericksburg. The 51st PA was transferred to the Western Theater, where Hartranft saw action at the Battles of Vicksburg, Campbell's Station, and Knoxville; in the latter two actions, he served as commander of the 2nd Division of the IX Corps while still a colonel.

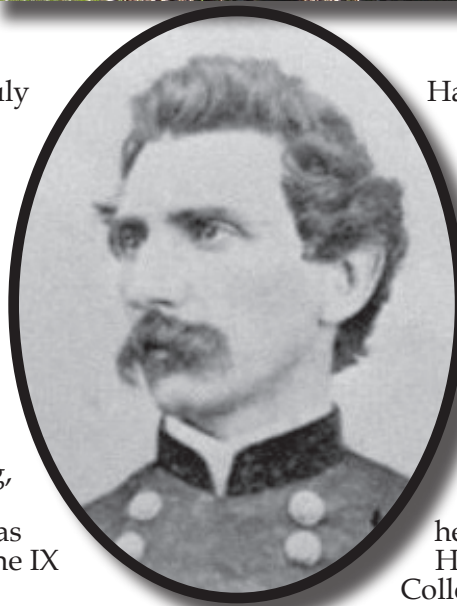
Hartranft commanded the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division, of the IX Corps in the 1864 Overland Campaign, participating in the fighting at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania before he was promoted to brigadier general, as of May 12, 1864. He continued in operations against Richmond and Petersburg.

His brigade distinguished itself in the Battle of Peebles' Farm. When the IX Corps was reorganized, he was given command of a new 3rd Division, consisting of newly raised PA regiments. Hartranft was brevetted major general by Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant for defeating Confederate General Robert E. Lee's last offensive at the Battle of Fort Stedman, bringing his untested division from its reserve position and counterattacking to recover the captured fort.

At war's end, Hartranft commanded the Old Capitol Prison and was appointed a special provost marshal during the trial of the Lincoln conspirators. He was noted for his kind treatment toward Mary Surratt, the first woman executed by the Federal government. On July 7, 1865, Hartranft led Mary Surratt, Lewis Paine, David Herold and George Atzerodt to the gallows in Fort Lesley McNair. He read them their last rights and they were hanged.

Hartranft was elected governor of Pennsylvania in 1872 and proved himself to be a strong advocate of education, municipal reform, banking regulation, industry and commerce, and the reorganization of the National Guard. He supported suffrage for African Americans, and championed the rights of the workingman. He was the 5th commander-in-chief of the Union veterans' organization, the Grand Army of the Republic, serving from 1875 to 1877.

Hartranft returned to his home in Montgomery County in 1879, where he accepted the position of Postmaster. He was subsequently appointed Port Collector for Philadelphia, and was also reappointed to command the Pennsylvania National Guard, which he had helped develop. John Hartranft died in Norristown in 1889 and was buried in Montgomery Cemetery near Norristown.



*John Schlotter served 21 years in the United States Army and retired as a First Sergeant in the US Army Reserve. He served in Desert Storm with the 344th Military Police Company performing Enemy Prisoner of War escort duties. Although new to re-enactment, Mr. Schlotter has always had an interest in the military history of the United States. He has the honor and privilege of working in Gettysburg Pennsylvania and is thankful of the opportunity to remember those who gave their lives for this country. Mr. Schlotter lives in Hanover PA.*