

## William Johnson

( - 18 Aug 1863)

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*The Evening Star, Monday August 17, 1863*

### **Serious Explosion at the Arsenal**

On Friday afternoon, a serious explosion took place at the Washington Arsenal, by which several persons were burnt, one or two seriously. It appears that seven ordnance men and one citizen were opening cartridges under a shed near the wharf which had been condemned having got damp in the hold of the vessel in which they had been brought here. The balls and caps were being detached, while the damaged powder was placed in a barrel, which, when nearly full, was dumped overboard. By some cause as yet unknown, the powder in the barrel (about 100 pounds) exploded, setting off, also, a pile of cartridges, injuring the following:--Wm. Johnson, badly burnt and internally injured, since died; Fred's Herman, seriously burnt and internally injured, but little hopes of his recovery; John Penn, badly burnt; Phillip Kletz; Corkins and the citizen, face, arms and hands burnt, and not seriously. Johnson and Klotz, as soon as the explosion took place jumped overboard. The workmen from the various shops ran out at once and helped the injured men to the hospital of the post, where they received prompt attention from the surgeon in charge. Johnson, however, was so seriously injured that his death took place on Saturday afternoon, and he was buried yesterday with military honors in the Congressional Cemetery. Herman still lies in a precarious condition, and but little hopes are entertained for his recovery; but all the others are improving, and will soon be on duty.

The cause of the explosion is not known with certainty, but it is supposed to have been from a percussion cap of a breach loading cartridge, which had not fallen in the box intended for it, being rubbed by the bottom of the box which one of the men was moving at the time. The affair, however, will be fully investigated.