



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# "ACTION FRONT"

Circular No. 167

July 2009

## On This Date

**July 1864**

### **Morning Report**

#### **Remarks for the Month of July, 1864**

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

- 1 Sergt G. H. Hamilton returned from Hospital at Chattanooga.
- 2 Wm. Costello and Thos. McInerny rept'd for duty. Command left of the front with horses
- 3 E. G. Bloomfield, transferred to V. R. C. G. O. No. 188. W. D. dated Apr 28, 1864.
- 4 C. P. Russell was enlisted & mustered into service at St. Paul Minn. as a recruit in 2d Minn Bty Dec 22 1863. March 1864 he was placed under command Capt. Woodbury. While enroute for the battery at Chattanooga, he was taken sick and left in hospital. Lieut. Dawley, then in command of the battery upon receipt of the muster & Deserter Roll failed to take him up on the morning report. An error was not discovered until July 4, 1864.  
John Ball on previous return reported as 2d Lieut awaiting muster, the Battery being below the minimum strength thereby declining him from muster he resigned his commission to the Gov. of Minn.
- 5 Ing. Olsen, Dischg. March 9th 1864. Cert. of Disability Notice rec'd from Col. J. L. Simonsen, Indianapolis, Ind. of date April 1st 1864.
- 10 Whitman, a recruit erroneously dropped and not taken up in Report. Corp. W. A. Spaulding reported for duty from hospital.
- 18 Returned to camp Stringer's Farm from 'the front' - Marietta, Geo.
- 23 Corp. H. W. Towle sent to F. Hosp No. 2 Chattanooga, Tenn.
- 30 Ed T. Tillotson -- joined from arrest for desertion. Rep't'd a deserter May 25, 1864. Apprehended in Chicago Ills. May 28, 1864 and for safekeeping was placed in the guard house, whence

from some misapprehension, he was sent without the knowledge of his commdg officer to Camp Douglas. He should have been taken up May 28, 1864 on this Report and reported absent in arrest.

- 31 Ed Tillotson Under arrest and sent to Chattanooga T. under guard

## Upcoming Events

July 11-12 Reenactment at Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The website advertizes this event as:

The Civil War returns to Cedar Rapids. Come walk through the camps of the Union and confederate armies. Listen to the Generals discuss strategies, learn about battlefield medicine, and even drill with the troops. This year's theme is "Letters from Home." Real letters from Iowa soldiers will be read throughout the weekend. There will be a battle each day as the armies fight for control of the valley. The site is the Seminole Valley Farm located at 1400 Seminole Valley Road NE, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

***If you plan to attend this event, contact John Cain IMMEDIATELY!! If we do not have a gun crew, we will not be attending this event!!***

Please check in with the officers before taking off to Iowa to be sure of the details.

## **The Boys of '61**

Most of you have heard about the memorial to all Minnesota Civil War soldiers that a non-profit group is trying to gather support for erecting at Fort Snelling. There will be much more about this in the coming months, but the best way to keep up with the progress is to check their website:

<http://www.boysof61.org/>

### Next Meeting

Sunday, August 2, at Boscobel. We will hold a brief meeting between breakfast and church.



## A Letter to Mrs. Bixby

Many people have read about the famous letter supposedly written by President Lincoln to a widow who had lost five sons in the war. Reprinted here is the letter and historical notes about the event. It is, as Paul Harvey would have said, "the rest of the story."

*Executive Mansion  
Washington, D.C.  
November 21, 1864*

*Dear Madam,*

*I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.*

*I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.*

*I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom.*

*Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,  
Abraham Lincoln*

### Note:

President Lincoln wrote this letter expressing condolences to Mrs. Bixby, a widow who it was believed had lost five sons in the Civil War. After Lincoln wrote this letter, it was later learned that only two of Mrs. Bixby's five sons had actually died in battle. In fact, one of her sons had deserted the army, one was honorably discharged and it is unclear what happened to the other son. Mrs. Bixby was believed to be a Confederate sympathizer and destroyed the original letter.

A reprint of the letter appeared in an eastern newspaper. The authorship of this letter is much debated and many scholars believe it was actually written John Hay, one of President Lincoln's secretaries.

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Everyone loves Tanya Graves' cookies and she has shared the recipe with us! Get those spoons and bowls out and start baking!

## Molasses Sugar Cookies

3/4 c soft butter  
1 c sugar  
1/4 c molasses  
1 egg  
2 c sifted flour  
2 t baking soda  
1 t ground cinnamon  
1/2 t salt  
1/2 t ground cloves  
1/2 t ginger



Beat together butter and sugar till creamy. Add molasses and egg, blend well. Mix dry ingredients, add to molasses mix. Cover and chill dough. Bake at 375 for 6-8 mins.

The trick with these cookies is when the dough forms a ball without sticking to your fingers it's ready to bake. You need to watch— if the cookies bake too fast, they can burn. Sometimes I have turned the oven temp down. For our reenactments, I double this recipe. I think the next time I make these, I will be adventurous and make them with white and wheat flour.

# **Battery Profile**

## **Silas Augustus Howard**

Silas was a Scottish immigrant, coming to America with his two brothers and widowed mother. They landed in New York, but Silas did not stay in that state. He set out for Pennsylvania where he took up farming. In October of 1848, Silas married Rebecca Ann Carpenter. They had two children when Silas decided to move the family further west to Minnesota. They arrived in Saratoga, Winona County, and went into farming once again.

Then the Civil War broke out and men from Winona County were recruited heavily. Silas was 37 years old, but he decided to enlist. He joined the Battery on January 28, 1862, along with several other men from Winona County. Silas was 5' 7" tall, had blue eyes, auburn hair and a light complexion.

Military service was something that might have been familiar to Silas as his father had been a soldier and given his life in that calling. Silas fell victim to another type of enemy when he joined the Army--disease. Silas began battling chronic diarrhea in March of 1862 and was still fighting with that disease when he was thrown from a horse. The fall injured his back and hip, causing some paralysis. On the 28th of October, Silas was given a disability discharge and sent back to Minnesota. His military service had lasted about nine months.

Back in Minnesota, Silas and Rebecca continued to live on the farm with a side interest in trading horses. In 1869, they moved to Sabula, Iowa.

It was in Sabula that Silas decided to apply for a pension based on his disability discharge from the army. He hired a pension notary to help with the claim since Silas could not write his name, only make his mark. The statement made by Silas at that time might indicate why there were no further records in his pension file about his actually receiving the pension. The statement he provided reads: *He was thrown from his horse while engaged in Battle at Shilo Tenn on Sunday April 7th 1862 Said fall from the horse having broken my hip bone on the right Side Causing me to be a cripple for life and rendering me unable to perform manual labors for my support also is still affected with Chronic direahea caused by hardship and exposure while in the line of my duty in Said 2nd minnesota Battery* (The spelling, punctuation and capitalization are just as they appear on the pension form.)



What may have given the Pension Department cause to question this application was the date of the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee. It was indeed fought on April 7th, but the Second Minnesota Battery was still in Minnesota in April. The Battery did not move south until the first week of May and then remained in Missouri for a time to be outfitted with guns and equipment before moving into Tennessee. The Battery was not engaged in the Battle at Shiloh. They did pass over the battlefield in the summer of 1862 and it is possible Silas was thrown from a horse at that time, so his injuries could have happened there, but not during the actual battle.

In Silas' defense, his discharge signed by Captain Hotchkiss on October 28, 1862, describes a fall from a horse and injuries that match what Silas told the Pension Department. Since Silas couldn't read, he might not have been aware of the pension notary adding a bit of drama to the injury or perhaps it was a simple misunderstanding. Indications are that Silas did not receive the pension he was seeking.

Silas and Rebecca moved again and finally landed in Royal, Nebraska. Along the way, the couple had a total of 13 children.

Silas died on January 20, 1906 and was buried in the Royal Cemetery. Rebecca filed for a widow's pension and received \$8.00 a month, signing her application with a mark rather than being able to write her name.



# Recap

## June 13 —Woodbury Park, St. Francis, MN



The weather was perfect for spending the day in the park! The ladies set up a "parlor" to have tea, visit and sew while the soldiers lounged around their tents between drilling and talking with the public. There were more people visiting us this year than for several in the past, so we did have visitors this year. Mrs. Thorpe and her granddaughters stole the show in their perfect period dresses as they walked on stilts, played marbles and looked so wonderful! Miss Addie began teaching Briar how to walk on stilts, too. The soldiers in the parade looked sharp and in perfect step as they passed those waving on the corner. It was a very nice day!



## June 26-28 — Reenactment at Franklin Grove, Ill



This event had a number of firsts—the first time our newest members joined us, the first time we attended the Chaplin Creek event, the first Gray event in quite some time, and the first time the fire department came around to tell us we had better take shelter from the approaching storm on Saturday night!! We had enough warning that we were able to tie everything down, load stuff into vehicles, and everybody get to shelter before the storm hit. Some members went to local motels and others hid out at the church designated a shelter, and two brave souls watched the twisting clouds from a building on the site. When it was over, the had stitching pulled out of one tent corner and that was all in our camp. Others had tents down, but no one was hurt and a rainbow came out just before a brilliant sunset.

The Battery boys went Gray on Saturday and managed to help keep the Yankees out of the town. On Sunday, they went Blue and were once again on the side of the victors as the Yankees chased the Rebels out of Chaplin Creek. The boys were joined by our newest recruit, Private John Crozier. He and his wife, Brenda, had a few things for their personas and Battery members were able to come up with enough other pieces to get them outfitted for the weekend. They both found the sutlers and by the end of the weekend, they had more stuff to go home with than they brought!



***The Second Minnesota Light Artillery Battery is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Civil War history by living it.***

***Membership is \$12 per year. Non-member newsletter subscription rate is \$6.00 per year.***

***For information on the Battery, please contact:***

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