



## 2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

# “ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 165

May 2009

## Upcoming Events

**WITH ALL SCHOOL EVENTS:** Please **RESPOND ASAP** which schools you can help at! We need to know what stations to plan at which schools and who will be staffing them. **Arrive on time** as we need everyone to set up and be ready when the kids come.

May 2 Murphy's Landing, Shakopee, MN  
This is an “on your own” event, a kind of spring muster, open to Battery members and several other units.

May 4 Kaleidoscope School, Albertville MN  
**7525 Kalland Ave.**, near exit 202 from Interstate 94 in Albertville. Arrive by **7:15** as classes begin at 8:05!! We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

May 6 Bluffview, Lake City, MN, ½ day  
Arrive by 8:15 to be ready for the students at 8:45. This is a half day presentation.

May 15 Eagle Point Elementary, Oakdale MN  
**7850 15th Street North, Oakdale** Arrive by 8:15 to be ready for the students at 9:15. We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

May 18 Calvin Christian School, Edina MN  
**4015 Inglewood Ave. S, Edina.** Arrive at 8:50 to set up, students arrive at 9:50. We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

May 25 Memorial Day, Red Wing, MN  
Arrive at Bay Point Park by 7:30 to set up.

May 28 Oakdale Elementary, Oakdale MN  
**821 Glenbrook** Arrive at 8:15 to set up for students at 9:15. We will set up 4-5 stations and rotate students through.

June 1 Twin Bluff Middle School, Red Wing, MN  
Arrive by 8:30 to be set up for students at 8:55. We'll be doing two sessions in a half day presentation.

**Bring your bag lunch for the school events (period correctness NOT required) as there will be NO time to go get anything.**

## On This Date

**May 1864**

### Remarks for the Month of May, 1864

(Numbers indicate the day of the month)

*If you remember from the last newsletter, the end of April's report stated the command had been furloughed at Fort Snelling for 30 days. The reports stop and do not pick up until May 23.*

23 Command reported at Ft. Snelling Minn, H. Dunn, Adam Eppinger, Thos Robb, John Gutteridge, C. Martin, J. F. Spencer, recruits, rept'd for duty. John Ball 2d Lieut., commissioned May 10, 1864, and awaiting muster. Absent with leave.

25 Deserted: Ed. T. Tillotson

27 Arr'd at Chicago, Ills.

28 E. T. Tillotson arrested in Chicago Ills as deserter and having been placed, for safe keeping in charge of the Pro. Guard, was sent to the officer of that guard without the knowledge of Tillotson's com'dg officer, to camp Douglas, from whence, when the command was ready to take the cars enroute for Chattanooga, T. there was not time to remove him (see remarks for July 30, 1864 of this report.)

30 Deserted: Charles Martin. Command Left Chicago, Ills. and arrived at Lafayette, Ind. at 3 p.m.

31 Arrived at New Albany, Ind.

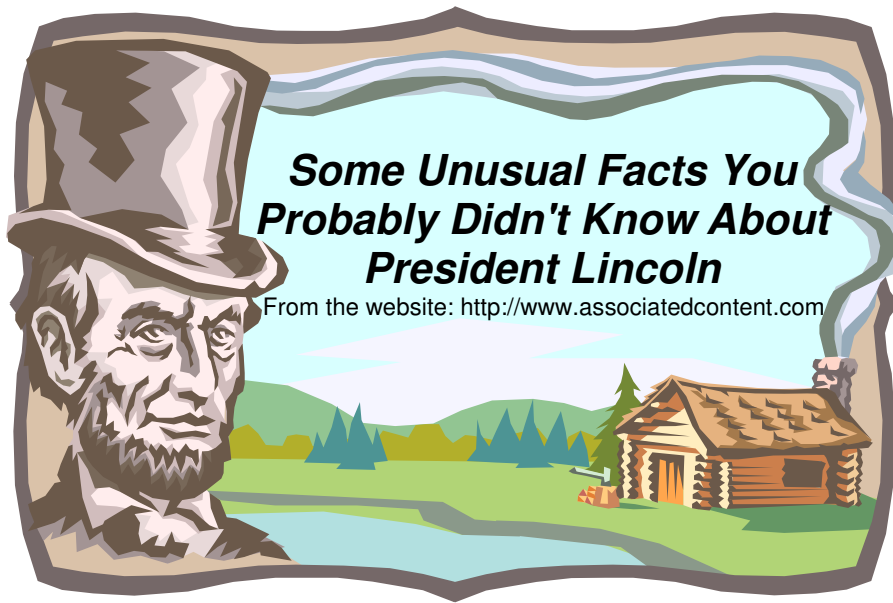
### Next Meeting

**May 28 noonish**

Held during the lunch break at the Oakdale School event.



Please see the **Coming Events** and respond to those events you will be attending. We need you!



Despite how much has been written about our 16th President, these are some facts and theories you might not know. Your editor has not verified every one of these facts, so enjoy them remembering that not everything on the web is as "accurate" as it could be!

Abraham Lincoln's mother Nancy died from "milk sickness" in 1818 when Lincoln was only nine years old. "Milk sickness" was caused by the consumption of milk contaminated by the toxin, Tremetol. This toxin is found in the White Snakeroot plant. Cows would often graze on the White Snakeroot plant and passed the toxin to humans. "Milk sickness" killed many settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Abraham Lincoln is the only American President to hold a patent. He had a fascination with machines and often took them apart to study. Patent number 6469 was issued on May 22, 1849 to Abraham Lincoln. His invention was for "A Device for Buoying Vessels Over Shoals" according to his patent application. It proved impractical and was never used.

The Gettysburg Address was probably not Abraham Lincoln's best speech. On May 29, 1856 Abraham Lincoln spoke in front of the Illinois Republican Convention in Bloomington, Illinois. Present were over 40 reporters and at least a thousand people. Those in attendance were so memorized that no one took notes during his 90-minute speech and no exact account of this "Lost Speech" exists! Another theory about this speech that it was so inflammatory that despite its brilliance, the newspapers refused to print it.

John Wilkes Booth's older brother, Edwin, saved the life of Abraham Lincoln's son Robert! In a strange coincidence, Edwin Booth around 1863 or 1864 in Jersey City, New Jersey, saved Robert Lincoln's life. A crowd of people were waiting for a sleeping car late at night and Robert was pressed against the train. When the train began to move, he lost his footing and fell into the space between the train and the platform. Edwin Booth reached out and pulled Robert to safety. Edwin Booth was considered the finest actor of his generation and was very well known. Historians doubt Robert Lincoln ever told his parents of this incident.

Abraham Lincoln's death masks were made before he was killed. Abraham Lincoln sat for casts of his face in both 1860 while a member of the US Senate and again in 1865. The first cast was created by Leonard Volk in Chicago in April of 1860. A month later Volk traveled to Springfield, Illinois, to cast Lincoln's hands as well after Lincoln was nominated for President by the Republican Party. Volk noticed Abraham Lincoln's right hand was swollen as a result of much handshaking the night before. The second cast of Lincoln's face was made by Clark Mills in Washington, D.C. in February of 1865, two months before Lincoln's assassination.

Abraham Lincoln's body was almost stolen. In the 1870s, Ben Boyd, a very important member of the country's biggest counterfeiting rings, was arrested. Boyd had been the master engraver and was vital to the success of his gang. "Big Jim" Kinealy, leader of this illicit operation, planned to steal Abraham Lincoln's body and hold it for ransom. He wanted \$200,000 in gold and the release of Boyd. The gang had to flee Springfield when one of the gang's members told a woman of the plan while drunk and the story quickly spread. Forced back to Chicago, the gang was soon infiltrated by Secret Service Agent Lewis G. Swegles. The gang then planned to steal the body November 7, 1876, which was Election Day in Springfield. They would hide the body under the Indiana sand dunes until the ransom was paid. The grave robbers broke into Lincoln's tomb and were attempting to move the coffin when Swegles alerted eight detectives who had been hiding. The tomb robbers escaped, but were captured in Chicago ten days later and sentenced to one year in jail for their grave robbing efforts.

Abraham Lincoln has no living descendants. His great-grandson Robert Lincoln Beckwith died in 1984. He left no heirs.



# **Battery Profile**

## **Ole Torgerson**

Ole was one of the Norwegian immigrants to Minnesota in the late 1850's, seeking a better life in an area that reminded him of Norway. Farm land was good in the southern portions of the state and it was wide open for homesteading. Ole went to Scott County, just a little west of another large Norwegian settlement in Dakota County. It is believed he may be a cousin of the Torgeson brothers who served in the Second Battery from Dakota County, but final proof has not yet been found.

When Ole came, he brought his wife, Margit, and their son, Torger. Ole and Margit were married in Norway in 1853. Their first child, a son, was born on December 4, 1856, in Norway. He was a baby when the family came to Minnesota. Another baby was born in 1861, but that baby died very young.

News of the 1864 draft rendezvous reached Ole at the same time as it did the Torgerson brothers and Ole went to St. Paul to enlist. He enlisted on August 30, a day ahead of Tolleff, two days behind Kittil, and three days behind Knud. Ole was entitled to the bounty of \$100, a third of which he got upon signing the agreement to serve for one year. He did not actually sign his name—he made his mark in front of witnesses. He probably could not read or write in any language as in 1915, he was still making his mark. Ole had been born on February 28, 1828, in Vanda, Norway, making him 37 years old. He had brown eyes, sandy hair, a light complexion and stood 5' 5" tall.

Drill, scouting missions, and garrison duty was all the Battery really did during the last year of the war, so Ole did not see major fighting during his time in the army. In June of 1865, the men of the Battery were moving by train in Tennessee when some of the cars derailed. As the cars began to tip, the men riding in and on them jumped for their lives. Ole jumped and said he badly bruised his hands and face, but thought nothing else had been hurt. He was more concerned about his comrades who were hurt much more seriously.

At least that was what he thought. The next day, Ole reported a severe pain in "the right of the bowels" and described it like having a knife put into him. He said ever after that, any heavy labor, strain, or lifting caused the pain to return. Ole continued to struggle with what he finally decided was a hernia for many years.

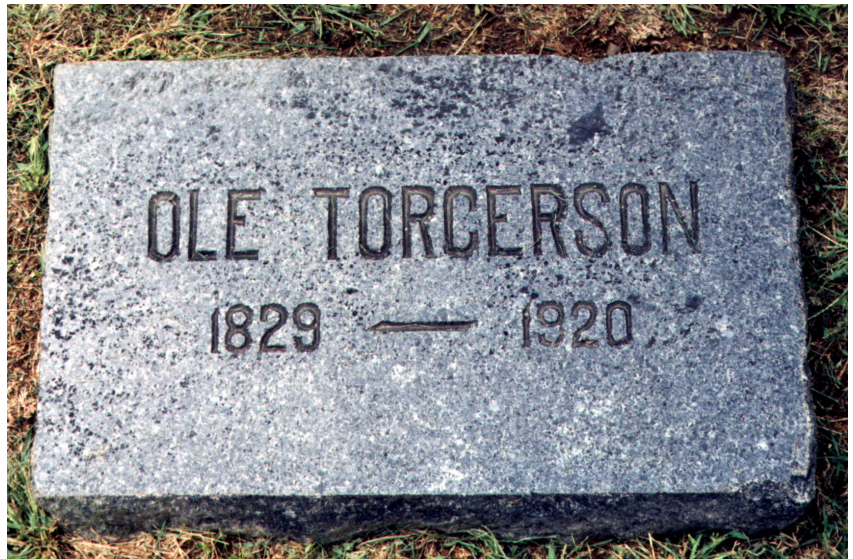
Ole was mustered out of the army at Fort Snelling on August 16, 1865, and went home to his farm in Scott County. As was allowed by government order, he took his knapsack, haversack, and canteen with him.

Margit and Ole had two more children for a total of four, but only two lived to adulthood. At some point, Ole moved to Dakota County and lived in Eureka Township and Farmington. It was the last move as he remained there for the rest of his life.

Ole's train wreck injury was made worse in December of 1888. He was bringing in a load of hay to the farm yard from the meadow when he drove into a snow bank. It upset the load and Ole fell, the load landing on him. He had to work his way out from under the load of hay and said he very nearly died before he managed to struggle out from under the weight.

In 1890, Ole applied for a pension. He blamed the train wreck for some of his problems, complicated by the hay accident, and the rheumatism he had developed from sleeping on damp ground while in the army. An interesting notation appears on the application. When Ole went into the army, the descriptive roll said he had sandy hair. On the pension application, it noted he had red hair. The pension application also demanded to know why Ole's last name was spelled so many different ways. He couldn't write to sign it, so he probably didn't know how it should have been spelled, either. Ole told the Pension Department he believed his name was spelled wrong from everyone pronouncing it wrong. That answer seemed to satisfy the Pension Department that Ole was who he said he was.

Ole died in Farmington, Dakota County, on January 5, 1920, and was laid to rest in the East Christiana Church Cemetery.





## **Recap**

### **Saturday, April 4 Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators**

The MACHE educational event at the River Centre took our gun inside for a drill in the big auditorium and a booth where Battery members talked to hundreds of people! The morning group session with the students had Battery members sharing history with about 700 kids! It was an awesome day! Special thanks to everyone for their hard work and planning to make this event come off so well.



### **April 24-26 Reenactment at Keokuk, Iowa**

Submitted by John Watkins

It was delightful after 7 months to once again pull out our Civil War boxes and load up for our next event! We were Keokuk-bound! Saturday dawned damp after rain during Friday night, but the weather remained cloudy and pleasant for the battle that day. The ground was incredibly soft, and the wheels of the gun sank into the ground 3 or 4 inches. This made it a little difficult to adjust our aim, but still manageable.

Daryl served well as cook, and Elizabeth treated everyone to apple fritters baked over an open fire for dessert, complimented by ice cream from Neil! Wow, was it ever good! Saturday evening was very calm—like the calm before the storm which we were to later learn was brewing in the west. However, the evening was great for taking pictures! That night we had quite a heavy downpour that lasted for 30-45 minutes, accompanied by high wind, but everyone stayed relatively dry, especially those of us who were in the officer's tent (Thanks, JC, for sealing those seams!).

Morning formation included the addition of our youngest soldier, Connor, who proudly presented his mighty array of weapons for inspection. Look out, you Reds!

Something in the breakfast eaten that morning caused

the soldiers' teeth to do weird things, and only a picture would do justice. Can anyone help us out here?



Even Connor had problems!

The sun came out by mid-morning, which made the battle a little hot, but we'll take that over rain any day! Plus, we had dry canvas for the trip home! Hooray! All considered, this event was grand, and everyone had a good time. Can't wait for the next event!



***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.***

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