



2nd MINNESOTA BATTERY

“ACTION FRONT”

Circular No. 186

April 2011

On This Date-150 Years Ago

The inevitable showdown between the North and South that had been stewing for decades boiled over into a shooting war in April of 1861 when Southern forces opened fire on the Federal fort in Charleston, South Carolina's harbor. Fort Sumter was the last Union holdout and with Major Anderson's refusal to abandon his post, the Southerners felt they had no choice but to shell him out. The bombardment shattered the walls of the fort, but when it was over, there was no loss of life on either side from the fight. The only death came when Anderson ordered a salute to the U.S. flag as it was lowered. A gun misfired and killed a man.

Neither North or South really understood what they were getting into. The North was convinced that a bit of saber rattling would bring the Southern states back in line. The South was certain there was a peaceful solution and even if there was a fight, little blood would be shed. A common saying was that a teaspoon (another version said it was a teacup) could hold all the blood that would be spilled in any war that came.

President Lincoln was careful not to make any move that would recognize the seceded states as legitimate, despite the efforts they had made in setting up their own government. He did not call Southerners "enemies," instead finding terms like "wayward cousins", "misguided countrymen" and the like to describe them.

Minnesota tendered the first regiment to the Union and men fought to sign up before it was full. They only enlisted for 90 days, again evidence of how little they realized what they were getting into. One of those who enlisted in the First Minnesota was William Staples. Military commanders soon realized a 90 day enlistment was not practical and changed it to a three year enlistment, allowing any man who did not want to remain in the army to leave with honor. William served three weeks with Company H before he opted to get out. A year later, he enlisted again, this time with the Second Battery where he served for a year before being discharged for disability.

Upcoming Events

April 9, Flag Return to the Capitol, St. Paul

The Second Battery is providing two color guards for the ceremony of returning restored battle flags of Minnesota regiments to the State Capitol. Privates Brian Tomashek and Bart Hokestra have volunteered for the honor of guarding the flag of the First Minnesota Battery.

Everyone is welcome to attend and encouraged to dress in period attire. Color guards need to arrive at the Capitol by 12:00. Linda Cameron is your contact. The event begins at 1:00.

This event is open to the public and should get a fair amount of media coverage.

April 30—May 1 Reenactment at Keokuk, Iowa

This annual event is gearing up for a full five years of special commemorations for the 150th years of Civil War anniversaries. Check out their website at: <http://www.keokukiatourism.org/civilwarschedule.pdf> and scroll all the way to the bottom to see their plans.

This year, Saturday will be the Battle of Belmont which was General Grant's first major battle. It almost ended in disaster when his army was cut off and nearly destroyed on the banks of the Mississippi River at Belmont, Missouri, on November 7, 1861. Sunday's battle will be a recreation of the battle at Wilson's Creek where Confederate forces routed the Union Army in the first major battle in the Western theater, August 10, 1861. The victory gave Confederate forces control in southwest Missouri.

There are also many civilian activities planned. Please notify John Cain or Daryl Duden ASAP if you plan to attend so we can get a good meal count!

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at the event in Keokuk, Iowa—whenever events allow us time to get in the meeting!



Draft Exemption Certificate!

We've all read about how the recruiting officers checked potential recruits to see if they were sound enough for service with one requirement being teeth on both the top and bottom. Well, here is absolute proof that it really did happen. Rufus T. Downs of Anoka was examined by the Board of Enrollment and found unfit for duty and therefore exempt from all military service because he had a **lack of teeth, upper jaw!**

This is a new piece of period information your editor had never seen before and was thrilled to find in the archives of the Anoka County Historical Society recently. We love those repositories of history!!

FORM 30.

CERTIFICATE OF NON-LIABILITY, TO BE GIVEN BY THE BOARD OF ENROLLMENT.

We, the subscribers, composing the Board of Enrollment of the Second
District of the State of Minnesota, provided for in section 8, Act of
Congress "for enrolling and calling out the national forces," approved March 3, 1863,
hereby certify that R. T. Downs, of Anoka,
of Anoka county, State of Minnesota, having given
satisfactory evidence that he is not properly subject to do military duty, as required by
said act, and the act approved Feb'y 24, 1864, by reason of Lack of teeth
upper jaw, is exempt from all liability to military duty for the term
of Life.

Geo. Keith

Provost Marshal, and President of Board of Enrollment.

Before Draft

J. A. Thacher
Member of Board of Enrollment.

L. D. Wheeler
Surgeon of Board of Enrollment.

for F. Rueger M.D.

Dated at St. Paul Minn.,
this 20 day of Aug, 1864.

NOTE.—This certificate is to be given in all cases where it is applicable, according to the acts of Congress referred to above.

Battery Profile

Benjamin P. Joy

When Benjamin was mustered into the Second Minnesota Battery on September 2, 1864, he knew he would not be joining a unit where he would be alone. His brother, Horatio, had already been serving in the Battery for over two years.

Benjamin was the little brother, being not only three years younger than Horatio, but standing more than two inches shorter at 5' 9" tall. Benjamin was born April 5, 1838, in Racine, Wisconsin, his family being one of the pioneers to that area. Benjamin had blue eyes, brown hair, a sandy complexion and was working as a farmer when he enlisted.

The draft quota often assigned men to places that were short and this is what happened to Benjamin. He was living in Spring Grove in Houston County when he went to Rochester to enlist, but agreed to have his enlistment count toward the draft quota for Utica in Winona County. He received the first third of his bounty payment, a bounty which would eventually total \$100.

The time Benjamin spent in the Battery was uneventful, the only special notation was that he joined the Battery's Bible Class.

Uneventful until June of 1865. Benjamin was with a detachment of men who were riding in freight cars between Knoxville and Philadelphia, Tennessee. The train cars derailed and the men riding in and on top of them were thrown or jumped from the cars. In the confusion, Benjamin injured his left ankle enough to require him to use crutches to walk. Captain Hotchkiss supplied the crutches and stated that Benjamin was unable to return to duty after that and was still using the crutches when the Battery was mustered out in August.

Benjamin went back to Spring Grove, but did not stay there. He moved to Fremont in Winona County where he remained until 1875. From there, he moved into the city of Winona and then spent at least some time working in a logging camp in Wisconsin. In January of 1877, Benjamin was scaling a pine log when a skid flew around and struck him in the head just behind his right ear. It caused the loss of all hearing in his right ear, left a constant "roaring", and "spells of dizziness".

Benjamin cited his ankle and the injury from the logging accident when he applied for his pension in 1892.

By this time, Benjamin was living in St. Paul. He left St. Paul in 1899 and moved west to Lyon County, Minnesota, where he remained until 1912 when he moved back to the Soldiers' Home in Minneapolis. It was his

last move. Benjamin died on December 1, 1912, and was laid to rest in St. Paul's Oakland Cemetery. His grave was not marked until 2002 when it was brought to the attention of the Cemetery Association and the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table. A veteran's stone was ordered and placed on Benjamin's grave.



Recap

March 12, Winter Camp Anoka County Library, Rum River

We had a great turnout (both Battery members and visitors) for this event on a cold and snowy day. We called it "Winter Camp" and we got winter! 17 degrees with snow and wind, but it was warm inside. The library staff counted 167 people (and she said she knows she missed some) to come through during the three hours. Everyone I talked to was extremely pleased with the event. Here is a portion of an email I received from the library staff:



We've gotten so much positive feedback about these programs from our customers, it would be impossible to share it all. Here's just one example of the comment a staff member received after the "Civil War Winter" program: "I just had the nicest conversation with someone who had attended last Saturday's program. She was entranced by how bandages were rolled and other facets of Civil War life. Today she requested several fiction books on the Civil War and a nonfiction book on the Underground Railroad and quilts. She had just happened on the program but was so pleased that she could attend a program like this locally--no need to go into "The Cities"."



Another email I received commented on the upcoming Live at the Library day we participated in last year and will participate in again on May 21: *The group that was so popular and authentic in their re-enactment of the "Civil War in Winter" will be joining us again this year at the Rum River Library during Live at the Library on May 21st from 10am – 2pm. Be sure to let our customers know they can catch the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery again then. The Battery's authentic Civil War encampment features military artifacts, a camp kitchen, the camp laundry, and other ways to experience authentic Civil War camp life. Their gun drill, featuring a cannon that is shot several times during the event was hugely popular last year and is sure to be a big attraction again this year.*

Huzzahs all around, Second Battery members! Well done!



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:

President

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Treasurer

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Battery Website:
<http://www.2mnbattery.org>



Military Election Results

Being an odd numbered year, our military leadership elections were held at the March meeting. The military leaders for the Second Battery will be:

Lieutenant	John Cain
Sergeant	Daryl Duden
Quartermaster	Sergeant Jim Rosasco
Corporals	Neil Bruce, Jay Overby, and Ron Graves.

Congratulations to our returning and newly elected officers and non-coms!